

# KALABHRA INTERREGNAM - A RETROSPECT AND A PROSPECT

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## “KALABHRA INTERREGNUM”—A RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT

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### A Brief Outline

The attempts to resolve the Kaḷabhra problem during the past 50 years have become involved in a series of misconceptions, prejudices and narrow outlook. The conclusions reached therefrom appear premature, idiosyncratic and unsound. The differences of opinion expressed by authors have interpolated new factors of conflict and confusion into the problem. The artificial and arbitrary recognition of a ‘Caṅkam age’ lasting for the first three centuries of the Christian era and its presumed relation to the Kaḷabhras have further obscured the true underlying picture. Uncritical mixing up of epigraphic and literary sources in discussions is another detrimental factor in preventing the natural emergence of the factual state of affairs.

A re-interpretation of some of the words and phrases occurring in the Vēlvikuṭi charter and a correct understanding of the sequence of events enumerated therein categorically proves that the invasion of the Pāṇḍya territory by the Kaḷabhras happened during the regnal years of the Pāṇḍya king, Rājasimha I, who in turn promptly drove the invader back into his territory. Therefore, the so-called ‘*Kaḷabhra interregnum*’ was only of an extremely short duration lasting for a couple of years during the period of Rājasimha I (about the middle of the 8th century AD). The area of the terrain that was under the Kaḷabhra occupation constituted a relatively small part of the Pāṇḍya country,—between Karūr and Tiruchi in the north down to Chōlavandan, Tirumaṅgalam and Madurai in the South.

The Kaḷabhras denote the Western Gaṅgas by virtue of their having had the elephant as their crest and symbol. Their coun-

try, Gaṅgavāḍi, bordered on the Pāṇḍya domain on the south and the Pallava territory on the east. The three dynasties were in constant military altercations with each other, particularly along the borders. The episode mentioned in the Pāṇḍyan charters refers to one of such struggles. Similar encounters were of more frequent occurrence between the Gaṅgas and Pallavas from the time of Simhaviṣṇu through Nandivarman II Pallavamalla. Epigraphic records of the concerned dynasties bear ample testimony to these battles. The subjugation of the Gaṅgas spoken of in the Chālukyan epigraphs, however, is to be considered as mere embellishments until new evidence to the contrary is discovered.

The "*Kaḷabhra interregnum*" has been given an unwarrantedly exaggerated status and significance in the history of the Tamil country. An impartial evaluation of data clearly indicates that the Gaṅgas never had a permanent hold over the Pāṇḍya or Pallava territories to leave their impact. The only contribution of their having stepped into the Pāṇḍya country has been their leaving behind the descendants known by the name Kaḷappāḷars, who soon became completely absorbed into Tamil land and its culture. The Kaḷabhras had nothing to do with the destruction of the Tamil 'Caṅkam' or of setting up a new order of things, political, literary or cultural.

### Retrospect

The discovery of the Vēlvikuḍi copper plate inscription in 1908 (Veṅkayya, *Ann. Rep. Epigr.*, 1908) marks an important event in having opened a new phase in the history of Tamil Nāḍu. Apart from giving an account of the genealogy of the Pāṇḍyas from the time of Kaḍunkōn to that of Parāntaka Neḍuñjaḍaiyan, the charter speaks of an invasion of the Pāṇḍya country by an outside party called Kaḷabhras. Venkayya surmised that the Pāṇḍya dynasty spoken of in this record was a new one, coming into existence long after an earlier line of kings (who lived during what has been traditionally known as the Tamil Caṅkam) was terminated. Implying that the Kaḷabhras could have been responsible for the extinction of the earlier house of

the Pāṇḍyas, Veṅkayya introduced the term “*Kaḷabhra interregnum*” to designate the interval of time between the end of the earlier dynasty and the commencement of the new dynasty headed by Kaḍuṅkōn.

From then on, the epithet “*Kaḷabhra interregnum*” has become an abracadabra to explain away the so-called ‘dark’ period in the political, cultural and literary histories of Tamiḻ Nāḍu and also to formulate new concepts. It has also played a significant role in perpetuating the fanciful theory that the opening three centuries of the Christian era represent the “Caṅkam” age (Sāṅkara, 1922; Nilakanta Sastri, 1929, and others).

The period of the Kaḷabhra occupation is said to have extended for nearly 300 years and to have involved the entire terrain ruled by the Ćeras, Ćōlas and Pāṇḍyas; it is said that some of these dynasties ‘disappeared’ following the Kaḷabhra incursion. It is also believed that Buddhism and Jainism received tremendous patronage during this period in the then Tamiḻagam and that the indigenous culture suffered total destruction. If there can be any truth in these statements, should we not expect to find some relics of the impact left by the Kaḷabhras during later periods? It is a pity that historians are silent on this point.

The most significant lacuna in the Kaḷabhra problem concerns their identity. Although several attempts have been made off and on to ascertain who they were, none of the propositions put forward are acceptable for one reason or the other.

The object of this study is to critically analyse and evaluate the source materials, to assess the opinions already expressed by scholars, to reject such of the views that are not in keeping with facts, and to provide a new angle for future research.

#### An analysis of the data in the Vēlvikuḍi grant of Parāntaka Neḍuṅṇaḍaiyan

##### (1) *On the duration of enjoyment of the brahmadēya gift.*

A village named Vēlvikuḍi was given to one Naṛkoṅṇan (line 31) — also called Kāmākkāni Naṛachiṅṇan (line 17) and

Kāmmakkaṇi Śuvarṇaṇ Siṅgaṇ (line 134)—the headman of Koṟkai, by a Pāṇḍyan *ādhirāja* by name Palyāgaśālai Mudukuḍumi Peruvalūdi so as to enable Naṟkoṟraṇ to complete a Vedic sacrifice (lines 31-38) that had been commenced earlier.

“Then a Kali king Kaḷabhraṇ took possession of the extensive earth driving away numberless great kings and resumed (village mentioned) above” (line 39).

“After that, the Pāṇḍyādhirāja named Kaḍuṅkōn..... occupied (the throne),.....destroyed the kings of the extensive earth” and established her (the earth) “in his own possession in the approved manner and destroyed the shining cities of kings who would not submit to him.”

This is the gist and sequence of events as narrated in the charter.

An estimate of the duration of enjoyment of the gift by Naṟkoṟraṇ becomes necessary in order to assess the interval of time and that elapsed between the bestowal of the gift and its usurpation by the Kaḷabhras. Saṅkara (1919/20) was aware of the fact that the inscription does not state “whether the donee himself or his successors also enjoyed the property. But *niḍu*, i. e., ‘long’ suggests that the latter alternative is more probable of the two”. Nilakanta Sastri (1929) also contended that the interval must be a fairly long one since Naṟkoṟraṇ complained to Parāntaka Neḍuṅjaḍaiyan after several centuries involving seven generations of rulers had elapsed. In justification of his stand he stated that the “gift was enjoyed by the donee and his descendents for long before the Kaḷabhra interregnum.” Krishnaswami Aiyangar (1935) also expressed the same opinion. “The *bhukti* or the gift of the village continued for a very long time means not within the life-time of Naṟkoṟraṇ but through generations.”

The inscriptional phrase, “vēndaṇ = appoḷudēy = nīrōḍ = aṭṭi = kkoḍuttamaiyā = niḍu-bhukti tutta (tuytta) .....” has been rendered by Krishna Sastri (1923/4) as “The king at once gave it with libations of water and it was since long (so) enjo-

yed." The authors mentioned above do not appear to be satisfied with the emphasis given to the word *nīḍu* in Krishna Sastri's rendering. Apart from drawing attention to the parallelism in the names of kings in the Vēlvikuḍi charter and in the so-called 'Caṅkam' literature, Krishna Sastri did not visualize genealogical relationships between them. Nilakaṇṭha Sastri and Krishnaswami Aiyangar, however, discovered much deeper significance in the parallelism and endeavoured to place Mudukuḍumi in direct line of the Pāṇḍya genealogy as one of its early ancestors. Therefore, they were obliged to stretch the interval of time between Mudukuḍumi and Kaḍunkōn in order to bridge up the 'Caṅkam' age (the first three centuries of the Christian era during which Mudukuḍumi is presumed to have lived) and Kaḍunkōn, whose date is deemed to lie in the borderline of the sixth and seventh centuries.

The inscriptional phrase cited above lends itself to an alternative rendering thus: "The king at once gave it (with libations of water) as a gift meant to be enjoyed for long". This meaning conveys the correct spirit with which the grant was made, implying, in other words, that it was to last as permanently as the sun and moon, a prevailing epigraphic idiom of medieval South India. Therefore there is no warrant to interpret the word *nīḍu* out of this context.

## (2) *Identity of Palyāgaśālai Mudukuḍumi Peruvaḷudi*

All efforts that have been made to identify Palyāgaśālai Mudukuḍumi have been strongly 'Caṅkam'-centered and 'Caṅkam'-biased. The contemporary understanding of the 'Caṅkam age' itself is an end product of a series of dogmatic assertions and the fixation of this age as confined to the first three centuries of the Christian era, is most arbitrary and artificial. Even so, the scholars who attempted to reconstruct the genealogies of the presumed kings of the 'Caṅkam age' could not accommodate Mudukuḍumi. Kanakasabhai (1904) left him out of the Pāṇḍya genealogy. Sivaraja Pillai (1912) raised serious doubts whether any Pāṇḍyan king could be credited with the performance of Vedic sacrifices at that early period as the 'Caṅkam age', as "conditions of that period do not seem to favour any such reli-

gious activity.” He therefore considered such of those bits of ‘Caṅkam’ poetry that attributes the performances of Vēdic rituals as being interpolations of a later date. However, he was at the same time inclined to identify Palyāgaśālai Mudukuḍumi with one Vēlḷiambalattu-tuṅḷiya Peruvaḷudi whose whereabouts are still much more uncertain. Sadasiva Pandarattār (1969), who discussed the supposed Pāṇḍyan rulers of the ‘Caṅkam’ period has chosen to completely omit the name of this king. Nilakaṇṭha Sastri (1932) also excluded this ruler from his reconstructed genealogy of the historical Pāṇḍyas and in a more recent publication (1965) cautiously refers to him as being a “more life-like figure than Neḍiyon”, thereby implying that the historicity of both these rulers is questionable, varying only in degree.

It is to be regretted that the king Tēr-māran of the Vēḷvikuḍi plates has been consistently taken to mean “Māran of the horse chariot”. A careful reading of the text indicates that the composer has employed the word *tēr* in a double meaning, one probably in the sense of chariot as above, and the other as meaning ‘learned’ or ‘discriminating’, in view of the qualities that are attributed to him besides those of his prowess: “performing on earth countless (gifts of) *gōsahasra*, *hiraṇyagarbha* and *tulābhāra*, relieved of the distress of (the Brāhmaṇas) who studies the Vēdas.” It is to be remembered that the ceremonies mentioned possess Vēdic sanction and that Tēr Māran was also a patron of Brahmaṇas who performed Vēdic sacrifices. Is it not likely that Palyāgamudukuḍumi Peruvaḷudi was a fitting epithet to the learned (*tēr*) Māran, who in turn has been identified as Rājasimha I?

Thus it becomes evident that Rājasimha I made the original gift of Vēḷvikuḍi to Naṟkoṟṟan and this king’s son Parāntaka Neḍuṅḷaḍaiyan re-granted the same gift to the same donee.

It is pertinent to recall *Puṛaṇānūṟu* 15 in this connection. The epithet ‘Palyāgaśālai Mudukuḍumi Peruvaḷudi’ is used here as referring to the personal name of the king. This poem mentions some of his deeds: driving the elephants to the battle fields of the enemy and his partiality towards Vēdic sacrifices.



These are shared both by Palyāgasalai Mudukuḍumi Peruvaḷudi and Tēr Māran thereby supporting the identification proposed here. Whether this and other poems of *Puṇanānūṟu* that contain references to Palyāgasalai Mudukuḍumi alone are to be considered as later interpolations as opined by Sivaraja Pillai or whether the whole or at least a major part of the poems collected together in *Puṇanānūṟu* were composed during or after the eighth/ninth centuries AD is another question.

(3) *A comment on the ādhirājas*

“aḷavariya ādhirājarai akala nīkki.....” (line 39) has been rendered as “..... driving away numberless great kings” by Krishna Sastri (1923/4). Even before the publication of the full text of the inscription by this author, the scope of the word *aḷavariya* had given rise to some differences of opinion. Sankara’s (1920/1) rendering of the concerned phrase reads: “countless Pāṇḍyas through their last representative.” Subramaniam (1921/2) promptly pointed out the unacceptability of this rendering and stated that *aḷavariya ādhirājarai* therefore means merely ‘countless Pāṇḍyas’”. Nilakanta Sastri (1929) clearly stated that *aḷavariya* is to be taken as a natural exaggeration. Even accepting this suggestion and allowing margin, the phrase *aḷavariya ādhirājarai* taken as a whole necessarily implies a number more than one. It may be at least two as Sankara (1920/1) interprets or at best a small number that could be counted on fingers. Yet the question remains open whether the terrain occupied by the Kalabhras was being ruled by more than one great king, *ādhirāja*, belonging to the same dynasty at one and the same time. If the term *ādhirāja* is taken in a non-technical sense as referring to endemic chieftains (and not in the sense of strictly crowned kings), it appears possible that different parts of the Pāṇḍya domain were in charge of a few subordinate members of the dynasty, who have been spoken of as *ādhirājas* by way of giving them an exalted status.

(4) *Were the Kaḷabhras ‘brave’ or ‘wicked’?*

The word *kali* used in connection with the Kaḷabhra king who took possession of the Vēḷvikuḍi terrain has been taken to refer to a dynasty called *Kalikula* (Krishna Sastri, 1923/4). Hultzsch (EI



XVIII p. 260) interpreted the term as indicating the people of the kali-age. (see also Arokiaswami, 1956). Nilakanta Sastri observed in 1929 and that nothing is known of such a dynasty yet." This statement stands as well today.

Srinivasa Aiyangar (1929) translated *kali* as 'cruel'. Several other writers also understand the word in this sense. For example, Sathianathaiyer (1954) calls the Kaḷabhras "terrible and ruthless", thereby extending the import of wickedness.

Neither of the above translations appear to be relevant in the context. The word *kali* is best taken to mean 'strong', 'powerful', etc., and the import of the phrase "kaḷabhran=ennum=kali=araiśan" as "a valorous king of the Kaḷabhra (clan)". That this should be the correct sense is further confirmed by the use of another adjective *tuḷakkamillā* (line 111) in reference to the same Kaḷabhras. This word, again, has been translated as 'ignoble' by Krishna Sastri (1923/4). Some of the later authors have accepted this rendering and freely attributed all the maximum sinning qualities to the intruders. Nilakanṭha Sastri (1929) pointed out the misunderstood context in which the word *tuḷakkamillā* was rendered and suggested that it should be taken to mean 'brave'. Thus both '*kali*' and '*tuḷakkamillā*' refer only to the sanguine prowess of the Kaḷabhras.

The single instance of their having occupied Vēḷvikuḍi, a *braṃhadēya* land, has been taken to summarily condemn the Kaḷabhras. It should be noted that in military encounters no one expects either party to know beforehand the *braṃhadēya* enclosures located in their advancing directions. The occupation of Vēḷvikuḍi by the Kaḷabhras should be taken merely as an unintentional routine during battles and nothing more. As Raghava Aiyangar (1930 b) observes, "it could not be the deliberate act on the part of the sovereign nor could it be due to any spite against any particular individual."

##### (5) Temporal factors in the sequence of events

The subject matter of the Tamil part of the charter is handled in the following sequence by the composer of the inscription :

- (a) The grant of the village Vēlvikuḍi (for the first time) to, Narkorṅṅan by Mudukuḍumi.
- (b) The occupation of Vēlvikuḍi terrain by the Kaḷabhra.
- (c) The ancestors (six generations) of Neḍuñjaḍaiyan, the donor of the grant.
- (d) The re-grant of Vēlvikuḍi to Naṟkorṅṅan by Neḍuñjaḍaiyan.

Superficially, the sequence of events appears rather curious and intriguing. A deceptive impression is gained as if the Kaḷabhras were in occupation of Vēlvikuḍi (step—b) all through the six or seven generation of kings (step—c) prior to the re-grant of the village (step—d). Nilakanṭha Sastri (1929) observes: “It is strange that this man (Naṟkorṅṅan) should have waited for seven generations after the Pāṇḍyan restoration to reclaim the grant.....”. It is stranger still that Naṟkorṅṅan should have lived through all these generations from Mudukuḍumi to Neḍuñjaḍaiyan to demand the return of his property! And, the strangest of all is the fact that this anomaly has been passively accepted by scholars.

The deception in this case is an artificially induced one, resulting from certain *a priori* assumptions viz.: that Muḍukuḍumi, the first donor of Vēlvikuḍi, was a king of the ‘Cankam’ age having ruled sometime before the third century A.D.; and that Kaḍuñkōṇ, whose date has been fixed around 600 A.D., was the king who fought against the Kaḷabhras and won back the lost Pāṇḍyan territory. These assumptions necessitated a bridging of the gap between the fourth and seventh centuries in order to force a seeming continuity in the Pāṇḍyan genealogy from the ‘Cankam’ age to the ‘post-Cankam’ age. It is towards this effort that unwarranted emphasis has been laid on the word *nīḍu* and the overall time factor from Mudukuḍumi to Kaḍuñkōṇ has been unduly stretched. Wherever it was advantageous, the word *pin* has been taken to convey a long stretch of time. For example, it has been argued that the grant received by the donee was in enjoyment of not only Naṟkorṅṅan but also of his descendants (Nilakanta Sastri, 1929 Krishnaswami Aiyangar, 1935; Anon, 1967).

The import of certain words or phrases employed in the passages often deviate in the degree of emphasis from modern usage and as such, one is obliged to make necessary allowances in order to appreciate the nuances and the underlying purpose of the language. The point that concerns us now is the usage of the adverb *pin* occurring at the end after stating an event. In modern parlance it denotes a time sequence—"after this or that is over" and under such contexts, the next event narrated naturally acquires the prefix '*then*'. In addition to this import in narrative method, there is yet another sense conveyed. Here again it is a temporal implication but in another context—a context in spoken idiom and style—denoting a provisional pause,—“let this lie aside for the time being”, implying that the broken end of thought or event would be continued later on.

The term *pin* used at the end of events in lines 39 and 40 respectively referring to the gift of Vēlvikuḍi by Mudukuḍumi (item—*a*) and to the Kaḷabhra incursion (item—*d*)—are to be taken in the sense that “let these events be set aside for the time being until they will be taken up again later when occasion arises”, and *not* as indicating long interval of time between the events. After informing that the *brahmādēya* gift, Vēlvikuḍi, was occupied by the Kaḷabhras, the composer, in his individualistic narrative style, introduces us to Neḍuñjaḍaiyan who belonged to the ancestry as outlined in item *c* and who re-granted the village to Naṟkoṟṟan (item—*d*). When it is thus realised that the item *d* is related directly to the item *b* both in time and space, it is clear that the item *c* is a parenthesis, and therefore, the chronological succession of events is indicated in the order *a*, *b* and *d*. Item *c* therefore is nothing more than a sub-story introduced into the main stream of narration. The latter may be paraphrased as follows: Naṟkoṟṟan received Vēlvikuḍi from Mudukuḍumi (Rājasimha I); it was abrogated by the Kaḷabhras; Parāntaka Neḍuñjaḍaiyan returned it to the donee.

Thus all these events happened within the life-time of Naṟkoṟṟan, who was a contemporary of two successive kings—the original donor and the second donor. At no stage in the entire

gamut of events is there any provision to stretch the intervals of time beyond the life-span of Naṅkoṅṅan, who must have lived the same number of years as any other average human individual.

(6) *A gloss on Kaḍuṅkōn*

Almost all writers on Kaḷabhras and on the Vēlvikuḍi charter have uniformly taken for granted that Kaḍuṅkōn, the Pāṇḍya ruler, drove away the Kaḷabhra intruders. The literary jargon adopted by the composer to introduce this person is quite dramatic and draws everyone's attention to this king as the cynosure of the dynasty. The rather superlative epithets that are used to describe his acts of valour are even more dramatic and create a sense of awe. He is said to have "destroyed the kings of the extensive earth surrounded by the sea.....". If this is interpreted literally, it means that he conquered at least the entire peninsular India!

In spite of the flowery language and exaggerated adjectives employed to describe his prowess, there is no reference anywhere in the inscription to presume that he reconquered the territory which had been occupied by the Kaḷabhras. Yet the notion that Kaḍuṅkōn retrieved the country from the Kaḷabhras has become deeply rooted in the minds of historians and has formed the foundations for erecting speculative superstructures. As explained earlier, in spite of the adumbrative sheen given to Kaḍuṅkōn, his place in the epigraph is only that of the initiator of a dynasty of rulers; he has nothing to do with the Kaḷabhras or with the actual events contained in the charter. The lone voice raised by Subramaniam (1921/2) conveying this mood soon became lost in the aggressive din of opposition.

### Assessment I

The earliest reference to the Kaḷabhras is found in the Vēlvikuḍi charter of the Pāṇḍya king Parāntaka Neḍuṅjaḍaiyan. Here they are spoken of as having occupied a terrain in which a village, Vēlvikuḍi, was situated. This village had been gifted to one Naṅkoṅṅan by a king named Mudukuḍumi, an ancestor of Neḍuṅjaḍaiyan. The donee appealed to Neḍuṅjaḍaiyan that the

property which he was enjoying had been usurped by the Kaḷabhras and that it may be returned to him. Neḍuñjaḍaiyan re-granted Vēlvikuḍi to the same donee.

In order to obtain a true import of the Kaḷabhra theme in the inscription, it is necessary to apply alternative meanings to some of the textual words and idioms. Then it logically follows: (i) that the original donor of Vēlvikuḍi village was Tēr Māran (Rājasimha I) who possessed the epithet, Palyāgaśālai Mudukuḍumi Peruvaḷudi in recognition of his having been the patron of those who performed Vēdic sacrifices; (ii) that when Naṟkoṟṟan, the donee, was enjoying the gift, the valourous Kaḷabhras over-ran a part of the terrain which included the gift-village; (iii) that in the meantime Rājasimha lost no time in driving out the enemy-occupants [and possibly died in the encounter;] (iv) that Parāntaka Neḍuñjaḍaiyan, his son, succeeded him. When the latter ascended the throne, Naṟkoṟṟan appealed to him for the re-grant of the village, and the king in turn complied. Thus the entire Kaḷabhra episode was over within the life-time of the donee who was a contemporary of two successive rulers.

The Kaḷabhras have been invariably referred to as a satanic clan and this has led to unwarranted animus. They have been pointedly accused of a total lack of sentiment because of their having occupied a *braṃhadēya* land. The adjectives used in the inscription for the Kaḷabhras nearly mean fearless or brave in the martial context. The occupation of Vēlvikuḍi by them should be taken merely as an unintentional routine during wars and nothing more.

### The duration of the Kaḷabhra rule

#### (a) On the concept of the 'Caṅkam age'

All authors without exception place the 'Kaḷabhra interregnum' as immediately following the so-called 'Caṅkam age'. In order to fully appreciate the Kaḷabhra problem it is necessary to critically examine the basis underlying the concept of the 'Caṅkam age'.

At a time when old Tamil anthological literature was being resurrected from manuscripts and printed editions issued in the last quarter of the 19th and the early part of the 20th centuries, such literature was collectively called the 'Çaṅkam works'. By tradition, 'Çaṅkam works' were until then strictly limited to the 18 major and 18 minor anthologies. The publication of old non-anthological literature—*Silappadikāram*, *Tolkāppiyam*, *Maṇi-mēkalai*, etc.,—coincided with the same period, and these works also were pushed into the 'Çaṅkam' fold.

It was soon realized that there was a wealth of source materials in these works of literature which would enlighten the social and cultural trends of the remote past. Caldwell's ideas on the 'Dravidian' and his opinions on the antiquity of the Tamil language—that it was a language which had developed without being contaminated or influenced by any external influences, set the stage for further rigidification of thought. The commentator of Iṟaiyanār's *Akapporu!* had already created a story glorifying the ancient character of Tamil literature. According to this author, this language was being patronised by kings over thousands of years through three successive literary Academies or 'Çaṅkam'. It is believed that the literature produced during the last 'Çaṅkam' has come down to us.

The names of kings and chieftains that figure in the 'Çaṅkam' literature were given historicity, often confusing epithets with personal names and their genealogies reconstructed under Çāra, Coḷa and Pāṇḍya dynasties. In this endeavour (i) stray references to Roman people occurring in some of the 'Çaṅkam' works; (ii) the identification of certain place names mentioned by the Greek geographers of the early centuries of the Christian era with towns or ports of South India; (iii) the discovery of Roman coins of roughly the same centuries in the same terrain; (iv) the mention of some articles of trade and commerce in the 'Çaṅkam' works and in the account of the Greek geographers; and (v) the presumed synchronism of the regnal period of one Śēraṇ Senguṭṭuvan of *Silappadikāram* with a Gajabāhu of the Ceylon chronicle, *Mahāvamsa*, were brought forward, by curious logic, as

proofs for placing the 'Çaṅkam' works (along with *Śilappadikāram* and *Maṇimēkalai*) in the early period of the Christian era, at any rate not later than the third century A.D. As a consequence, it became imperative to accommodate all the kings and chieftains mentioned in the 'Çaṅkam' literature strictly within this time span.

The contemporary concept of the 'Çaṅkam age' is thus the cumulative outcome of a series of superimposed *a priori* assumptions and repetitive assertions. The concept has been so well pamphleteered over the past five decades that any effort towards free thinking is promptly curbed. Even historians, who are expected to be guided by objectivity, have uncritically succumbed to accept the popular notions as proven facts.

#### (b) Commencement of the Kaḷabhra rule

When the Vēlvikuḍi charter came to light in 1908, Veṅkayya, its first commentator, cautiously avoided pronouncements on the relationship of the 'Çaṅkam age' to the contents of the grant. In reference to the tidal wave or deluge referred to in the inscription, he drew attention to parallel incidents from Tamil literature (*Maduraikkāṇḍi*, *Puṇānūṟu*, *Madura Stalapurāṇam*, *Tiruvilaiyāḍal purāṇam*, the commentary on Iṟaiyanār's *Akapporu!*); he also stated that "It is interesting to note that the name Kaduṅkon mentioned as that of the last Pāṇḍya king of the first Academy (Çaṅkam) occurs in our inscription as the designation of the first of the Pāṇḍya kings subsequent to the Kaḷabhra interregnum." With reference to the Kaḷabhra his words are: "In all probability, some successor of Mudukuḍumi was driven out of the Pāṇḍya kingdom by a Kaḷabhra king." Sankara (1920/1; 1922) expressed a similar opinion. Nilakanṭha Sastri's ideas have kept on changing during the course of years: in 1929 he thought that the Kaḷabhra occupation must have commenced "long after Mudukuḍumi"; in 1955 he was more specific that their incursion followed the 'Çaṅkam age', about 300 A.D.; in 1963 he placed the close of the Çaṅkam age in the fifth century A.D., and the Kaḷabhra incursion therefore should have taken place subsequently. Krishnaswami Aiyangar (1935) argued that the



interregnum should have commenced at the beginning of the fourth century. Rajamanikkam (1944) thought that the third *Çaṅkam* mentioned in the commentary of *Iṟaiyanār's Akapporuḷ* came to an end in the late third century and *Kaḷabhra* incursion followed immediately.

Thus there appear to be two schools of thought, one fixing the commencement of the *Kaḷabhra* inroad in reference to the end of *Mudukuḍumi's* rule and the other in reference to the close of the third '*Çaṅkam*' as the starting point. Venkataraman (1956/7), on grounds, independent of these presumed that the *Kaḷabhras* must have marched into the *Tamiḷ* country in the fifth century A.D.

#### (c) *Duration of the Kaḷabhra rule*

There is a much greater degree of diversity of opinion in regard to the period of occupation of the *Pāṇḍya* country by the *Kaḷabhras*. Veṅkayya (1908) and Krishna Sastri (1923/4) had no opinion to offer in this regard. The former author clearly admitted that "no information is forth-coming" which would help to ascertain the duration the *Kaḷabhra* rule over the *Tamiḷ* country. Sankara (1922) thought that the *Kaḷabhras* were prominent during c. 600 A.D. to c. 750 A.D. Nilakanṭha Sastri (1955) presumed that the interregnum lasted between 300 and 600 A.D. According to Sadasiva Paṇḍarattar (1969) and Arokiaswami (1956) the period lasted between the third to the sixth and fourth to the sixth centuries respectively. In 1963, Nilakanṭha Sastri changed his earlier opinion and said that it is a matter which "cannot be determined." Subramanian (1966) assumed the period to coincide with "a century or two before *Simhaviṣṇu*." Rajamanikkam (1944) placed the period of the interregnum between 250 and 375 A.D., and Venkataraman (1956/7) in the fifth and sixth centuries. Srinivasa Aiyangar (1929) proposed the shortest duration of one hundred years between 450 and 550 A.D.

According to Krishnaswami Aiyangar (1935), the date of restoration of *Vēḷvikuḍi* could not have been far removed from A.D. 769/70, which is the date ascribed to *Parāntaka Neḍuñjaḍaiyan*.

If this was a part of the campaign in driving away the Kaḷabhras from the occupied territory, then the donor of the grant gets the credit and not Kaḍuṅḡon; thus the Kaḷabhras' decline should have commenced in the eighth century. Veṅkayya (1908) had also expressed a similar view.

(d) *Termination of the Kaḷabhra rule*

As early as 1929, Nilakanṭha Sastri stated that the Kaḷabhras were driven out of the occupied territory by Kaḍuṅḡon in about 600 A.D. He has maintained this opinion all through his subsequent writings, although, as already observed, his ideas in regard to the period of commencement and duration of the Kaḷabhra occupation have been modified. Many authors from 1950 onwards hold the same opinion in regard to the end of the Kaḷabhra rule and also that this was brought about by Kaḍuṅḡon (Sathianathaier, 1954; Venkataraman, 1956/7; Mahalingam, 1969, *et al*). Rajamanikkam (1944) and Sathianāthaier (1954), after taking into consideration the part played by the Pallavas and Chalukyas also in vanquishing the Kaḷabhras, extend the period of Kaḷabhra occupation into the eighth century.

### Assessment II

The widely held concept of the 'Çaṅkam age' and the assumption that it lasted for nearly three centuries from the commencement of the Christian era are based either on extremely flimsy foundation or on a series of *a priori* assertions and re-iteration. Instead of re-examining foundations of the concept, it is unfortunate that superstructures of plausible stability have been constructed. The presumed termination of the 'Çaṅkam age' by the end of the third century A.D. has created an artificial void during the next 300 years in the literary and cultural history of the Tamil country until the commencement of the Pallava rule in the seventh century A.D. "Kaḷabhra interregnum" has been conveniently used as a plug to fill the gap between the third and the seventh centuries A.D. in an effort to provide a verisimilitude of historical and chronological continuity.

This situation necessarily raises some questions of consequential nature apart from the problem of the identity of the Kaḷabhras: if they had been in possession of a terrain—an extensive terrain involving the Pāṇḍya, Cōḷa and Cēra kingdoms as claimed by many authors—for 200—300 years, how is it that there has not been a shred of evidence of the impact that the Kaḷabhras should have left on the Tamiḷ land and its people? Were they really in occupation of such a vast area over that long period? Of course, questions such as these have not been posed openly.

The vast difference of opinion in regard to the commencement of the Kaḷabhra occupation is because of the unfounded recognition of the 'Caṅkam age' in the early centuries of the Christian era with diffuse upper limit. The variations of opinion in reference to the upper limit of the interregnum, on the other hand, is related to the criterion chosen to determine the dynasty that vanquished the enemies.

#### The extent of the Kaḷabhra occupation

When Veṅkayya announced the discovery of the Vēḷvikuḍi copper plates, he noted in passing "the Kaḷabhra occupation of the Pāṇḍya country." This remark has no more significance than a casual one as the author himself was fully aware of the extremely limited nature of data at his disposal. Sankara (1919/20) also appears to imply that the Kaḷabhra occupation affected the Pāṇḍyas, as a result of which "they were dispossessed of the kingdom." While commenting on the opinion expressed by this author, Subramaniam (1921/22) interjected: ".....the Kaḷabhra occupation of Madura.....", thereby specifying a locality in the area occupied by the intruders. After a comprehensive reading of the inscription, Krishna Sastri (1923/4) suggested with a greater degree of confidence that the Kaḷabhras "brought under subjugation the whole Pāṇḍya country including, of course, the village Vēḷvikuḍi."

According to Krishnaswami Aiyangar, the terrain occupied by the Kaḷabhras covered from south of Kāñchi to north of Kāvēri (1935). Krishna Rao thought that it was Tonḍaimaṇḍalam that became involved (1936). Neither of these authors substantiated

their opinions with reasons; their conclusions are based largely upon the Kaḷabhra-Simhaviṣṇu relationships. Sathianāthaiyer (1954) implied that a part of the Pallava country also had been occupied by these intruders.

The remaining authors fall into two groups. According to one of these, the area abrogated by the Kaḷabhras was relatively small, confined to Madurai and its environs or to the Pāṇḍya country as a whole (Srinivasa Aiyangar, 1929; Krishnaswami Aiyangar, 1935; Mahalingam, 1969). The second group of authors envisage a far greater area. Although Nilakaṇṭha Sastri expressed himself in favour of the first school in his earlier writing (1929), he himself endeavoured to create the second school later. According to this view, the intruders occupied the "whole country" (Tamiḷ land) and "overthrew all the established dynasties of Southern India....." (Nilakaṇṭha Sastri, 1955, 1963). Venkataraman (1956/7), Arokiaswami (1956), and Sadasiva Pandarattar (1969) tacitly agree with Nilakaṇṭha Sastri's revised opinion. Krishnan (1970) contends that it is not the "traditional Ćēra, Ćōḷa and Pāṇḍya" kingdoms that were occupied but the Pallava Ćōḷa and Pāṇḍya territories.

This difference of opinion has arisen as a result of the degree of emphasis that has been laid on two adjectives, *aḷavariya ādhirājarai* and *akali-ḍattai*, occurring in the inscription. According to the first school the scope involved in the phrases is restricted and according to the second, extended. The controversy in reference to the first phrase has already been referred to earlier. Nilakaṇṭha Sastri (1929) did not agree with the interpretation either of Sankara (1920/1) or of Subramaniam (1921/2), which was restricted in scope, and therefore suggested that "it seems simpler to make it (the phrase) refer to other rulers besides the Pāṇḍyas and understand the phrase *aḷavariya* as containing a rather natural exaggeration of the number of dynasties displaced."

Nilakaṇṭha Sastri's wavering attitude in implying that the Kaḷabhras over-ran the Pāṇḍya country in one breath and that the *ādhirājas* who were subjugated by the same Kaḷabhras belonged to rulers besides the Pāṇḍyas in another breath and yet at the same time contending that *aḷavariya* is an exaggeration is evidenced



in the inscription itself. Such hyperbolic epithets have been used for Kaṇṭkōṇ (“Destroyed the kings of the extensive earth”), and Śaṭaiyan (“removed the word ‘common property’ with reference to the country bordering on the roaring sea”). In the same way, just as the Kaḷabhras are said to have occupied “*akal-idattai*”, some of the Pāṇḍya kings figuring in the same inscription are also qualified by phrases conveying similar import.

In spite of such bloated praises encountered throughout the inscription either in reference to the Pāṇḍya kings or to the Kaḷabhras, the charter contains some data of value to obtain a rough idea of the terrain that was under the Kaḷabhra occupation.

There is no direct proof in the charter to presume that the donor of the grant was ruling from Kūḍal. However, there is an implied suggestion to that effect in the bio-data given for his father Rājasimha I. It is said that this king “renewed the palaces and high ramparts” at Kūḍal, Vañji and Kōḷi. These places obviously should have suffered destruction due to some military encounters and therefore necessitated renewal. Of these, Vañji and Kōḷi have been respectively identified as Karūr and Woṛaiyur, both of which are located almost on the bank of the Kāvēri. Kūḍal, which is taken to be Mādurai, lies farther south, some 70 miles (112 Kms) as the bird flies. Rājasimha and his son Parāntaka Neḍuñjaḍaiyan could have ruled from any one of these localities as all of them had now been made safe to themselves and, resistant to the enemies. In any case, it looks as if these places had been rendered secure after they were reconquered by Rājasimha I from the hands of the intruders.

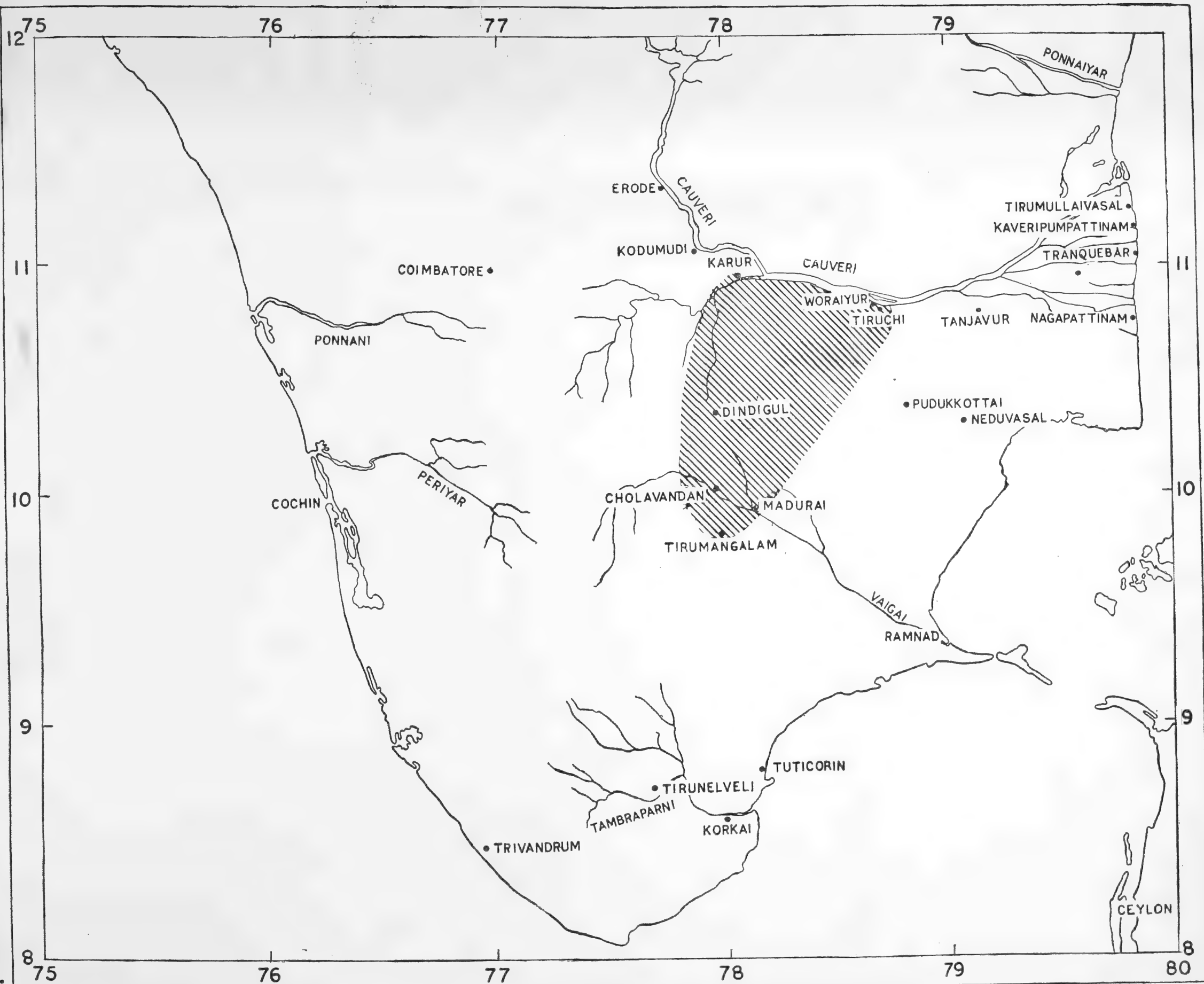
It is during this period, when Neḍuñjaḍaiyan was staying at Mādurai, that Naṟkoṟṟan come over to this place all the way from Koṟkai (near the mouth of the Tamraparṇi river)—which was under his headship—to lodge his petition. The village Vēlvikuḷi was situated in Pāganūr-Kūṟṟam which has been taken to be “identical with the division of that name in which the village Soḷavandān near Mādurai was located” (Krishna Sastri, 1923/4), and as we have seen, this was also a terrain overrun by the Kaḷabhras.

Just as Koṟkai had a headman, other strategical towns in the Pāṇḍya territory, such as Karūr, Woṟaiyur, etc., must have been under the control of chiefs who were closely related to the ruling Pāṇḍya kings by blood. Because they represented the Pāṇḍya royalty holding charge of fortified centres, they might have been enjoying a status similar to the rulers themselves in some specified measure. In all probability it is such subordinate chiefs that are designated as *ādhirājas* in the charter. The number of those that succumbed to the Kaḷabhras, as can be judged from the data available in the charter itself, cannot be more than three or four. It is also clear that their loci of concentration was the southern bank of Kāvēri, extending farther south down to Madurai.

This data also circumscribes *akal-iḍam* (expanse) that was over-run by the Kaḷabhras. The northern boundary was the Kāvēri itself between Karūr and Woṟaiyūr; the southern limit lay along the line joining Soḷavandān and Madurai through Tirumaṅgalam; and the eastern border included a part of the Pudukōṭṭai region (Map 1). Politically, the northern border was constantly exposed to the incursions by the Pallavas or their allies; the north-west and western areas (Koṅgu) was under the control of the Western Gaṅgas, who either on their own or on behalf of the Western Chāḷukyas, were a perpetual source of trouble to the neighbouring dynasties. Rājasimha's subjugation of Maḷa-Koṅgam, march to Pāṇḍikkōḍumuḍi and, establishment of relationships with the Gaṅgas are instances of this kind.

### Assessment III

The foregoing accounts have endeavoured to show that Palyāgaśālai Mudukuḍumi Peruvaḷudi is to be identified with the Pāṇḍya king Rājasimha I, who gifted Vēlvikuḍi to Naṟkoṟṟan and that Parāntaka Neduṇjaḍaiyan, the son and successor of Rājasimha re-granted the same village to the same donee. This clearly means that the Kaḷabhras should have overrun the Pāṇḍyan terrain during the time of Rājasimha and a major part of the occupied area should have been retrieved by this King himself. Presumably this king died and his son Parāntaka Neduṇjaḍaiyan came to the throne. Naṟkoṟṟan appealed to this king for the return of the gift



KALABHRA INTERREGNUM (Map I) (to face Page 100)



and the king in turn re-granted it. These events are in full agreement with the highly significant guess made by Krishnaswami Aiyangar (1935) that the restoration of Vālvikuḍi was "not far removed from A.D. 769/70 which is the date ascribed to him (Parāntaka Neduñjaḍaiyan) by the Epigraphist."

When the inscription is read with this background, some valuable clues float to the surface and these are helpful to resolve the nature and number of the *ādhirājas* involved in the term *aḷavariya* and the expanse of land occupied (*akal-iḍam*) by the Kaḷabhras. The *ādhirājas* were no other than the Pāṇḍya chieftains exercising strategic control from important places like Madurai, Karūr, Woraiyūr, etc.; thus the total number of the *ādhirājas* that succumbed to the Kaḷabhras could not have exceeded four or five.

Karūr, Woraiyūr, Sōlavandān and Madurai constitute roughly the corner points of the *akal-iḍam*, the total area representing a comparatively small part of the Pāṇḍya kingdom. It should be emphatically stated that there is not even a thread of evidence in the inscription to presume that more than one dynasty of South India were affected by the Kaḷabhra invasion; the Cōlas, Cēras or the Pallavas do not come into the picture in this context.

### Dynastic affinities of the Kaḷabhras

The basic data employed in discussions dealing with the affinities and whereabouts of the Kaḷabhras have been solely drawn from Tamil literature. An attempt to utilize the epigraphical sources in combination with information provided by literature is seen only in the contribution of Venkataraman (1956/7). The results of these studies over a period of 60 years have produced an unusually wide variety of opinions that fall under two major categories,—those that consider the Kaḷabhras as belonging to the Tamil stock and those that deny such an alliance.

#### (a) Tamil alliance

Gopinatha Rao (1919/20) identified a Muttaraiyan by name Śuvaran Māran *alias* Perumpiḍugu Muttaraiyan with the one who is said to have been an ally of the Pallavas and who was one of those connected with the coronation of Nandivarman II

Pallavamalla. This Muttaraiyan chief is styled 'the Kaḷvan of Kaḷvans'. The author commented that "Kaḷvan" which now mean's a thief, must have been held in high esteem, in older times," and assumed the contemporaneity of Kaḍuñkōn and this Muttaraiyan at a period prior to the Kaḷabhra incursion. Gopinatha Rao was thus led to think that the Muttaraiyan was the Kaḷvan Kaḷabhran who invaded the Pāṇḍya territory. Nilakaṇṭha Sastri (1929) did not agree with this equation. Furthermore, it should also be noted that there is much to be desired in our understanding of the origin and history of the Muttaraiyars and it is too premature to identify Śuvaran Māran with the Muttaraiyan connected with Nandivarman Pallavamalla.

In a rather diffuse and meandering argument involving very little factual data, and largely drawing from literary sources, Rajamanikkam (1944) revived Gopinatha Rao's opinions: in addition, he also brought in the chief of Koḍumbāḷūr into the Kaḷabhra alliance. In so doing he made certain *a priori* assumptions such as: the 'northern Karunāṭaka' king mentioned in the *Periapurāṇam* is the same as the Kali araśan of the Vēḷvikuḍi charter and therefore he should have been a Kaḷabhra; Kūṟṟuva Nāyanār of the *Periapurāṇam* was a Kaḷabhra; the Kaḷabhras migrated from Aruvā-vaḍatalai region and occupied the Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam, etc. Govindasamy (1965) also feels that Muttaraiyars and Kodumbāḷūr chiefs represent branches of the Kaḷabhras. It should be observed that these views are involved in unwarranted suppositions and assertions and that the dynastic histories and affinities of these clans themselves need detailed study and clarification.

Srinivasa Iyengar (1929) was convinced that Aṇṇa Vikkanta mentioned by Buddhadatta was a Kaḷabhra and that he was identical with Aṇṇa Kaḷappāḷan of the *Tamiḷ Nāḷalar Cāritai*. In the latter work it is said that this king imprisoned the kings of the Coḷa, Cēra and Pāṇḍya dynasties and that each one of them addressed the Kaḷabhra king in verses. Srinivasa Iyengar argues that the king Kaḷappāḷan and therefore the Kaḷappāḷars = Kaḷabhras were of Tamiḷian origin. His declaration that "The Kaḷappāḷas

were Tamil chieftains, as is proved by the fact that the three Rajas sang to them in Tamil" is absurd although amusing.

Raghava Aiyangar (1930 a), unlike Srinivasa Iyengar, equated Aṇṇa Vikkanta of Buddhadatta with the person of similar name occurring in the *Periapurāṇam*. He identified the Kaḷabhras with Veḷḷāḷas, equated Kaḷabhras with Kaḷappāḷars and suggested that the Kaliaraśan of the Veḷḷikuḍi charter bears similarity to the extent of identity with Kūṛṇṇu Nāyanār of *Tiruttonḍattokai*. While referring to Raghava Aiyangar's studies, Nilakanṭha Sastri (1929) felt that these were plausible suggestions with much potential. Krishnaswami Aiyangar (1935), on the other hand, offered his own comments on the views expressed by Raghava Aiyangar and questioned the authenticity of the identification of different individuals bearing euphonically similar names in reference to Aṇṇa.

Krishnaswami Aiyangar (1935) drew attention to a specific area, Kāñchi and Pulicat latitudes which was under the rule of a chieftain whose headquarters was Tirupati. The chieftain is referred to as Kaḷvar-kōman Puḷḷi, the king or chieftain of the Kaḷavar as found in some poems of *Puṇanānūṛu*. He postulated that these Kaḷvars=Kaḷavars were dislodged from their position, moved southwards to "Kāñchi and then into the territory of the Malaya-mān and his neighbours in the middle, and then into the country of the Coḷa, extending into that of the Pāṇḍyas ultimately.....This Kaḷavar or Kaḷar migration seems what is described in Sanskrit as the Kaḷabhra interregnum." This view has been accepted by Sathianathaier (1954) as being "most satisfactory". Vaiyapuri Pillai (1956) and Soundara Rajan (1968) also are in tune with it. However, we have already seen that there is no basis to include the Coḷa terrain under the Kaḷabhra occupation. Serious doubts have also been raised whether *Puṇanānūṛu* (of the 'Caṅkam age') is speaking of incidents of a period as early as that of the initial centuries of the Christian era or of events of a much later period. Thirdly, the identity of Kaḷvar/Kaḷavar with Kaḷabhra is far fetched.

The Veḷḷikuḍi plates refer to Kaḍuñkōn as a hero who destroyed the 'shining cities' (*oḷi-nagar=aḷitta*). Mahalingam

(1969) suspected a pun on the word *oḷi* which "in addition to the ordinary meaning of light and splendour, also denotes a territorial division and the people living in it." Taking the latter sense, the author asks: "Is it likely that the *oḷiyar* were the same as the Kaḷabhras of the Naga lineage?" This suggestion is based on the assumption that Kaḍuṅkōn drove away the Kaḷabhras. But, as observed earlier, this ruler was not the one who resumed the territory.

Sadasiva Pandarattar (1969) argues that as Varāhamihira does not mention the Kaḷabhras as a dynasty of rulers in South India and as the 'Caṅkam' works fail to refer to them, the Kaḷabhras should represent a clan who invaded the Pāṇḍya country somewhere from the north of South India. However, he does not indicate their home or identity in a more restricted sense.

#### (b) *Non-Tamiḷ alliance*

On the basis of information scattered in some of the Tamiḷ literary works of the medieval period (*Periapurāṇam*, *Tiruvīḷaiyādal purāṇam*, *Kallādam*), Venkayya (1908) suggested that the incident referring to Mūrthi Nāyanār was indicative of the Kaḷabhra occupation; he offered a "conjectural location of Kaḷabhras in the Kanarese country", because Mūrthi Nāyanār is said to be a Karnāṭa king. Subramaniam (1921/2) also expressed a similar opinion. Nilakanṭha Sastri (1929) categorically denied the existence of any clues in the *Purāṇās* to identify the Karnāṭakas with the Kaḷabhras; he also objected to the identity of the Kaḷabhra with the Erumaiyūran. Furthermore, there is also the open question as to what extent one can depend on the *purāṇas* of moral and religious import to draw historical materials.

Jambunāthan (1928) assumed that Aṇṇata Vikrama of Buddhadatta was a Kadamba ruler. Srinivasa Aiyangar (1929) drew attention to the mistaken reading of Kalabba as Kalamba (sounding similar to Kadamba) by the editor of the text of *Vinayavinicchaya* of Buddhadatta. Saletore (1936), obviously unaware of these reference, suggested in purely casual manner that the Kaḷabhras could be identified as the Kadambas. At about the same period

Krishnaswami Aiyangar (1935) ruled out the equation Kaḷamba = Kadamba as being historically unsound. Yet the philological temptation has remained alive. Aṇṇata Vikkanta of the Pāli text is taken to be a king belonging to the Kadamba dynasty; and the name-similarity has been carried so far as to suggest a Kalamba/Kalabba alliance to the Vijayanagar king Achuta Raja! (Jain, 1968). The Kadamba-Kaḷabhra alliance is untenable mainly because the Kadamba domains did not extend southward beyond the eleventh parallel.

Arokiaswami (1954) proposed an elaborate thesis on the origin of the Veḷḷāḷas in north India, their southward route of migration, and their occupation of the Tamil country where the three "crowned kings" held sway. He visualized that there were constant conflicts between the indigenous rulers on the one hand and the new settlers on the other. He thought that "the consummate effort (of the latter) against the ruling houses" is what has been designated as "Kaḷabhra interregnum". Two years later, however, he changed his opinion and suspected whether the Kaḷabhras could not be the Reṭṭi tribe which suddenly appeared in the Koṅgu country through Karnāṭaka/Mysore region (1956). He further identified Mūrthi Nāyanār as a ruler of this clan. As he himself admits, our knowledge of the Reṭṭis is next to nothing; we do not know where they came from or when. Under these circumstances his views cannot be taken seriously. Furthermore, we see that he does not substantiate his views in later writings. On the other hand, in 1967, he replaced Reṭṭis with Mauryas, with much less confidence in himself.

An approach to an analysis of the Kaḷabhra problem largely from epigraphic angle is seen in the study of Venkataraman (1956/7). Utilizing the material contained in some of the inscriptions scattered in the Mysore State, the author placed the original home of the Kaḷabhras round about Sravanabelagoḷa; thereupon they were supposed to have migrated eastwards and established a kingdom including Kōlār, Baṅgalore and Chittor districts and this unit as a whole was called Kalināḍu or Kaḷavarnādu, indicative of their Kālī-kula and of their original home Kaḷavappu (Sravana-

beḷagoḷa) respectively. They then occupied the territories of Pallavas (Tondanād), of Cōḷas and of Pāṇdyas. He also felt that "more than one family (of Kaḷabhras) ruled over the Tamilnad":—"Kūṟruva Nāyanār, the king of Kalandai; Aṇṇu Vikkanta of the Cōḷa country (who patronized Buddhism) mentioned by Buddhadatta and also figuring in *Yāpparuṇkalakkārikkai*; and the chief who occupied Madurai (a Jaina). Venkataraman's arguments for a Kali-kula having existed in the Karnāṭaka area are rather weak, as in every case the substitute 'valourous' for *kali* would equally fit the context; the reasons that he has provided for the recognition of a Kali are based solely on Jaina tradition; the relationships of the Kali-cult with either Kali-kula or Kali-era are not yet clear. Even granting that the Kali-kings were an historical dynasty, it is difficult to reconcile their location in the Sravanabeḷagoḷa area on the similarity of Kalinād/Kaḷavaranād. with Kaḷvappunād. Further more, the name Kalvappu in reference to Sravanabeḷagoḷa area occurs for the first time in the epigraphs of the early eighth century (Chidananda Murthy, 1966), while the Kaḷabhra incursion into the Tamil country is placed from "about the 5th century, if not earlier" by Venkataraman himself (1956/7).

### (c) Religion of the Kaḷabhras

When Venkayya (1908) suggested the probable identification of the Karnāṭa king of *Periapurāṇam* with the Kaḷabhras, he also accepted the *purāṇic* statement that the invader king was a Jaina, who began persecuting the Śaivas. When Srinivasa Iyengar (1929) attempted to equate Aṇṇu Vikkanta of *Vinayaviniccaya* with the Kaḷabhras, he presumed that this king was a Buddhist. Each of these opinions in turn has acquired its own following and the disciples have not hesitated to add their own imaginative flavours to suit their taste and context. Sadasiva Pandarattar (1969), following the first of these opinions, construed that the intruders—because of their language and religious persuasions having been different from those of the Tamilians—obstructed the growth of indigenous culture. Nilakanta Sastri (1963), following the second school, suspected that "possibly Aṇṇu himself was a Buddhist and the political revolution which the Kaḷabhras effected may have been provoked by religious antagonism." Pillay (1969) favoured

both the views and considered the Kaḷabhras as predatory invaders representing a "composite group consisting of Jains and Buddhists," He further added that "perhaps some Hindus also joined the invading group."

(d) *Nature of the literary sources*

As materials drawn from literary sources have been employed in a large measure for elucidating the affinities of the Kaḷabhras, it is necessary to have a clear idea of the period of composition of the concerned works, their subject matter and scope.

The colophon in *Vinayaviniccaya* states that this work was composed during a period contemporaneous with one Aṇṇa Vikkaṇṭa of the Kaḷabhra kula. The author of the work is a Buddhist by name Buddhadatta, whose date has been placed in the fourth century A.D. by some writers (e.g., Jambunathan, 1928) and in the fifth century by others e.g., Pillay, 1969). The identification of Aṇṇa Vikkaṇṭa with Aṇṇa Vikrama or Aṇṇa Vikraṇṭa of later Tamiḷ works and of Kaḷabhra kula with the Kaḷabhras/Kadambas/Kalambas has been presumed solely of phonetic similitude.

The same colophon also refers to the author as having lived in a place called Urāgapura. This place has been variously identified as Būdalūr (Srinivasa Iyengar, 1929), Kāvēripattana (Rajamanikkam, 1944), Tirunāgēśvaram (Subramaniam, 1966), Brū aṇṇuḍi, near Pāpanāśam (Mahalingam, 1969); in addition, there is also a commonly held opinion that Woraiyūr, near Tiruchi, was also known by the name Urāgapura. No doubt all these places are located along the banks of the Kāvēri and the area was under the imperial Coḷas from the ninth century onwards. The suggested date of Buddhadatta and the identification of Urāgapura as a locale in the Coḷa country of that period are not reconcilable with one another. There was no Coḷa dynasty in the fourth—fifth centuries in that area; if it is construed that it was the dynasty of the Coḷas of the so-called 'Caṅkam' age—and granting for a moment that such an age existed—then that dynasty should have become extinct around 300, A.D. The Vijayālaya line of Coḷas commence their rule only from the ninth century A.D. and



therefore this line cannot be pushed backwards to the fourth—fifth centuries. Furthermore, there is no king by the name Aṇṇuta Vikrama or Aṇṇuta Vikranta among the rulers of either dynasties of the Ḷas. Discrepancies such as these indicate that the identification of Uragapura in the Ḷa country is not accurate. It is also an open question whether Aṇṇuta Vikkanta or its variants refer to a personal name or to an epithet meaning “a person of valour who cannot be destroyed or defeated.” Whether there is convincing evidence to ascribe the authorship of the colophon to, Buddhadatta is also a matter yet to be decided. As such, the identification of Aṇṇuta Vikkanta as a king who occupied and ruled the Ḷa territory should be invalidated.

*Tiruttoṇḍar Tiruvantādi* is presumed to have been written by Nambi-andār-nambi. The date of this author has been placed generally in the 10th century as a contemporary of Rājaraja I (A. D. 985-1014), although some scholars of the Annamalai University (see Vellaivaranan, 1962) argue that he should have been a contemporary of Āḍitya I (A.D. 871-907). One stanza each is devoted to Mūrthi Nāyanār and Kūṛṇṇu Nāyanār in this work. In the first case there is no reference to any king having usurped Madurai. In the second case, the stanza refers to him as “Kaḷappaḷanākiya Kūṛṇṇavanē”. This has led Raghava Aiyangar (1930 a) to suspect if this person cannot be equated with the *Kali-araśan* of the Vēḷvikuḍi charter, “for the term Kūṛṇṇavan simply connotes the same idea as the expression Kaliyaraśan.” It is true that *Kali* and *Kūṛṇṇu* possess somewhat similar connotations in the sense of destruction. But they lend themselves to be interpreted by alternative meanings as well, without endangering the context. It has been shown on a previous page that the term *kali* in the context of the Vēḷvikuḍi charter could mean ‘valorous.’ Similarly, the term *kūṛṇṇu* in the scope and context under which it is used indicates another name for Lord Śiva and appears to bear a reference to the mythological episode of the Lord kicking Yama while saving Mārkaṇḍeya. (c f. கைற்றுகைத்தேவன்).

*Periapurāṇam* is presumed to have been composed during the reign of Kulōttuṅga III (A.D. 1178-1218). It deals with the lives

of the 63 canonized Śaiva saints, with the purpose of extolling their devotion and complete surrender to Lord Śiva. When literary form was woven around episodes that had been in currency for hundreds of years and this became superimposed with Śēkkiḷār's poetic imagination, it becomes an extremely difficult task to sift out fact from fiction, even if the narration should contain some elements of history.

Mūrthi Nāyanār's story is narrated in pious exuberance by Śēkkiḷār. He makes the hero a native of Madurai which in course of time is said to have been occupied by a king of Jaina persuasion from Karunāḍu. If only Śēkkiḷār had informed us of the name of the king who was displaced as also of the usurper, it would perhaps have been helpful in drawing some historical materials from the account. On the other hand, he has adopted in this case also the same idiom of narration as in reference to other saints—"once upon a time there lived a king....." Again, Śēkkiḷār has made use of the supernatural to place the hero on the throne of Madurai. In the history of Madurai or of the Pāṇḍya dynasty we do not know of any Mūrthi who ruled from Madurai or from the Pāṇḍya territory. When no credence is given to this incident in the history of the Pāṇḍyas, a similar attitude is perfectly justifiable in reference to the Karu-nāḍu origin of the usurper as well. The same story appears in the *Tiruvilaiyāḍal purāṇam* and *Kallāḍam* (13th century A.D.) with very little variation. From the point of view of the aim of these works, an usurper from any other country would suit as well. For a critical student of history there are no leads in the incident that would help him to reconstruct either the history of the Pāṇḍya or of the Karnāṭaka dynasties.

The 11th century work *Yāpparuṅkalavṛtti* and *Tamiḷ Nāvalar Čaritai* of a much latter date mention an Aḇḇuta Kaḷappālan who is supposed to have ruled over the whole of South India and who had imprisoned the then ruling kings of the Čēra, Čoḷa and Pāṇḍya dynasties. Srinivasa Iyengar (1929) identified this Aḇḇuta with Aḇḇuta Vikkanta (Kaḷabbha) of Buddhadatta. Raghava Aiyangar (1930 a) also agreed with this opinion. However, as observed by

Krishnaswami Aiyangar (1935), "Aççuta Vikrama of Buddhadatta was a ruler of Chōḷarāṣṭra with his capital at Kāvēripaṭṭinam. But the Aççuta under reference in literature is one associated with the hill named Nandi and must be held to have ruled what was the Gaṅga territory of Kolār." As already stated, there is genuine doubt if the colophon of Buddhadatta's work was written by the author himself, or more likely, by some one else later. In reference to the literary references under consideration, it should be remembered that they were composed several centuries after the Kaḷabhra invasion by which time facts had become shrouded in inseparable legends. Under these circumstances it is not advisable to look upon these Aççutas and Kaḷappāḷans as representing genuine historical persons.

Serious inconsistencies arise even if historicity be given to some of the Aççutas mentioned in literature. For example, Aççuta Vikrama of Buddhadatta is said to have been ruling from Kāvēripaṭṭinam, a place identified in the then Cōḷa country: the Aççuta Kaḷappaḷan is said to have occupied the Pāṇḍya, Cēra Cōḷa countries; at the same time, this king is said to have ruled from "Southern Tillai" which has been presumed to be the region of modern Čidambaram in South Ārcot district; and this king has also been equated with Kūṛṇṇu Nāyanār of *Periapurāṇam*! It should be emphasized here that the Vēḷvikuḍi grant categorically says that it was only a small part of the Pāṇḍya territory that was occupied by the Kaḷabhras and that *ādhirājas* other than those of the Pāṇḍya dynasty were not involved.

#### (e) *Coins of the Kaḷabhras*

Recently claims for the discovery of the coinage issued by the Kaḷabhras have been put forth (Ramayya, 1970, 1970 a, b). One of the coins is stated have been obtained from a fisherman at Kāvēripūmpaṭṭinam (1970) and two others from Madurai area (1971 a, b). The former and one of the latter (1971 b) are stated to show some letters of the Brahmi script of the fourth century A.D.; they have been read respectively as 'ka ḷa bra' and 'ka ḷa va ra'. The obverse of the first coin is said to depict what appears as a "Buddhist chaitya with a dome and a

spire on the top", and "on its right there appears to be a tree in railing"; the figure on the obverse of the second coin has been interpreted to represent Vināyaka. The reverse of the third coin (1971 a) also contains the scripts of the same kind which have been reads as 'kaḷabara' the *La* in this case being the largest and put sideways; the iconic representation on the reverse is believed to represent Muruga.

The find, in itself, is no doubt interesting. Yet one would wish more decisive information had been made available about the 'discovery' itself. Procurement of antiquities from fisher-folk and from 'somewhere' from Madurai area does not provide scientific authority in contrast to *in situ* finds, particularly in the case of numismatic objects. The somewhat different readings of the script on the three coins—all of them presumed to belong to the fourth century A.D.—add a further element of doubt whether there could be that extent of variability in writing presumably of one and the same name composed of mere three or four letters.

In spite of the startling conclusions reached by the author, many of his basic assumptions are wholly unwarranted: "When the Satavāhanas collapsed, domiciled Saka, abhira and allied warrior bands from the north gravitated South in search of employment, adventure and loot"; "The Pallavas probably egged them on to go down further south as they would be a nuisance to them, in the Kāñchi area" (1970). "The Kaḷabhras were war bands from the North and the Deccan, made up of old Kshatriya clans like Yaudheyas, Malavas and domiciled foreign invaders like Sakas, abhiras, etc., all mixed up and completely Indianised". In other words, the author has assumed the very points which he has to prove. In any case, there does not appear to be any convincing arguments or proofs to refer the coins to the Kaḷabhras. The script as well as the motifs are likely to provide alternative interpretations should they be re-examined from an objective approach.

#### Assessment IV

Certain words and proper names mentioned in the Vēḷvikuḍi charter (8th century A.D.) bear phonetic similitude to the ones

occurring in Tamiḷ literature of the 11th and 12th centuries A.D. and also in a Pāli text, presumed to have been composed in the fifth century A.D. These instances have been freely drawn into discussions bearing on the dynastic affinities of the Kaḷabhras. It is unfortunate that fact and fiction have become dove-tailed in varying degrees and proportions throughout the discussions and has resulted in a notorious variety of opinions. Neither the proposals to identify the Kaḷabhras as belonging to the Tamiḷ stock nor those referring them to outside agencies have provided any conclusive convincing results. While the sincerity of the authors who have contributed towards the clarification of the problem is beyond question, their anxiety to 'solve' the problem, however, is invariably surcharged with uncritical acceptance of source materials.

The Kaḷabhras have been identified with the Muttaraiyars, the Koḷumbāḷūr chiefs, the Kaḷḷars, the Veḷḷāḷas, the Kadambas, the Kaḷavars, the Oliya-nāgas, the Reṭṭis, the Karnāṭakas, the Kali dynasty; their religious affinities have been suggested to be with Buddhism, Jainism, and also Hinduism; the *kali-araśan* of the Vēḷvikuḍi charter has been tallied with the Aṇṇutas and Kaḷappāḷans of later literary sources. It is significant, however, that none of these opinions or suggestions have helped us to place the Kaḷabhras in a correct historical perspective. The problem that posed itself 60 years ago has remained in desperate *status quo* to date. The recent reports on the discovery of Kaḷabhra coins are purely subjective judgements. An unbiased critical approach is needed to assess their identity and affinity.

#### PROSPECT

The inferences drawn from the fore-going discussion may be set forth under two categories:

##### (a) *Negative inferences*

Naṛkoḷḷan, the donee of the Vēḷvikuḍi gift, did not enjoy the benefits for a long time after having received it from Palyāgaśālai Mudukuḍumi Peruvaḷudi, nor were the benefits enjoyed by his descendents; the donee did not have to wait through six generations of kings to reclaim the original benefits.

The Kaḷabhras did not occupy the entire Pāṇḍya dominion; nor did they encroach upon the territories of the Čōlas or Čēras; the *ādhirāias* who succumbed to the enemy did not include dynasties other than the Pāṇḍya.

The Kaḷabhras were not in possession of their occupied land for one to three centuries; they did not invade the Pāṇḍya country at the close of the so-called 'Caṅkam age'; they were not responsible for the termination of this age.

Kaḍuṅkōṇ was not the Pāṇḍya ruler who retrieved the territory from the hands of the Kaḷabhras.

The Kaḷabhras do not belong to any of the dynastic alliances suggested so far. The proposed philological derivations of the word Kaḷabhra are wholly unsatisfactory.

The coins attributed to the Kaḷabhras do not seem to belong to them.

#### (b) *Positive inferences*

Palyāgaśālai Mudukuḍumi Peruvaḷudi is no other than Tēr Māraṇ, who in turn has been identified with Rājasimha I. This king was the donor of Vēlvikuḍi to Naṅkoṅṅan. The Kaḷabhras overran this village during their southward march in the reign of Rājasimha, sometime after he instituted the *brahmadēya* gift. And Rājasimha himself drove away the intruders and possibly died soon after the encounters.

His son, Parāntaka Neḍuñjaḍaiyan succeeded to the throne, who, in response to the appeal preferred by the donee Naṅkoṅṅan, re-granted the village.

*Thus, the duration of the Kaḷabhra occupation of a part of the Pāṇḍya country was confined to a few years during the regnal years of Rājasimha himself (middle of the eighth century A.D.)*

*The limits of the Pāṇḍya terrain under the temporary occupation by the Kaḷabhras were, the modern Karūr and Woraiyūr along the Kāvēri in the north, and Sōḷavandan and Madurai in the South; the western boundary lay along the line joining Karūr and Sōḷa-*

*vandan while the eastern passed through Koḍumbāḷūr and a few other places of the erstwhile Pudukkōḷṭai State between Wōṛaiyūr and Madurai.*

### Identification of the Kaḷabhras

With the summary of conclusions reached thus far as given above, the identity and relationships of the Kaḷabhras may now be re-considered.

#### (a) *A commentary on the term Kaḷabhras.*

- (i) (Tam.) Kaḷvan/Kaḷvara > (Skt.) Kaḷabhra.

Gopinatha Rao (1919/20) suggested this derivation on the analogy of Vaḷavan > Vaḷabha. Nilakanta Sastri (1929) has rightly pointed out that the genealogy "is not equal" and also referred to the impossibility of this method of derivation.

- (ii) (Tam.) Kaḷvra/Kaḷavara > (Kan.) kaḷabharu > (Skt.) Kaḷabhra.

Krishnaswami Aiyangar (1935) proposed this sequence on the basis of the identification of the Kaḷabhras with Kaḷḷars. The Kannaḍa form suggested would be more likely Kaḷabara and not Kaḷabharu. Furthermore, there is no word in the Kannaḍa language as indicated in the intermediary.

- (iii) (Tam.) Kaḷappa/Kaḷappālar > (Pāli) Kaḷabbha (Skt.) Kaḷabhra.

Although this sequence formulated by Srinivasa Iyengar (1929) may appear to be technically sound, there is equal possibility for reading it in the reverse direction. Furthermore, there is no valid basis to take Tamiḷ Kaḷappa as the starting point.

- (iv) (Tam.) Kaḷavar > (Kan.) Kaḷabar > (Skt.) Kaḷabhra (Tam.) Kaḷappirar.

This sequence (Rajamanikkam, 1944) is the same as the one mentioned in (ii) above, but the Tamiḷ Kaḷappirar is presumed to have been derived from its Samskr̥t parent, which in turn, had a Tamiḷ parent.



It is thus seen that all the above authors have preferred to assume the Tamil form as the starting point. However, in none of the concerned inscriptions we see these forms having been used to refer unequivocally to the Kaṭabhras. The Pallava and Chālukya epigraphs give the uniform reading Kaṭabhra in the Samskṛt part. Of the Pāṇḍya copper-plate inscriptions, the Vēlvikuḍi epigraph retains the same form in the Tamil part while the Dalavāyapuram script appears to give the reading Kaṭappālar. The last mentioned charter happens to be the latest epigraph (A.D. 887) to speak of the Kaṭabhras and the variant version of the word here may perhaps be due to the peculiarity of the script of this period or to the corrupted form of pronunciation.

Therefore, the unmodified version of the word clearly belongs to the Samskṛt language and it should be taken as such for elucidation. Kaṭabha in Samskṛt means a young elephant. The addition of the suffix *bhr̥* (Kaṭabha-bhr̥) implies a sense of closeness of context to the elephant.—‘of the elephant’, ‘intimately connected with the elephant’. The dropping out of the latter *bha* yields the form Kaṭabhṛ.

It is well known that the elephant was the crest for the Gaṅgas and Sēndrakas, and for the former the same symbol appeared on their flags as well. The Sēndrakas always held a “subordinate position in the Nagarakhandā division of the Banavasi province, at first under the Kadambas and then under the Chalukyas” (Nilakanta Sastri, 1960). Therefore, this family could not have come into contact with the Pāṇḍyas or Pallavas. On the other hand, the Gaṅgas (Western), with their long history extending from the beginning of the fifth century, and their dominion involving the borderlines of the Pāṇḍya, Pallava and Chālukya territories practically all through their early history appear to have been referred to in the concerned inscriptions by an epithet chosen after the royal crest of the invaders.

It now remains to examine to what extent the new identification proposed here is in accord with the information contained in epigraphic literature. It should, however, be borne in mind that much more critical data is necessary to draw categorical conclu-

sions. Large tracts of the Gaṅga and Chālukya territories are yet to be systematically explored for new inscriptional data and some of the old inscriptions are in need of more critical re-reading and transcription. Under such limitations all that can be achieved is only to give a sort of broad outline of the probable story—as a provisional measure—leaving the picture necessarily in a somewhat blurred pattern. Modifications in the outline or filling in the details can be taken up only when new data become available.

(b) *Pāṇḍyas and KaḶabhras/Gaṅgas*

Two Pāṇḍyan inscriptions, Vēlvikuḍi (EI. XVII. No. 16) and Dalavāyपुरam (TASSI, 1962-65, pp. 1-31) mention KaḶabhras. There appears to be general agreement that these respectively belong to the eighth and ninth centuries A.D. although Nilakanta Sastri (1963) is inclined to place the former also in the ninth century.

The Dalavāyपुरam charter of Parāntaka Vīra Nārāyaṇa Pāṇḍya attributes the victory over the KaḶabhras to one of his ancestors in a purely routine manner in the same way as other achievements—including mythological and legendary—are treated. The Vēlvikuḍi charter specifically mentions the king who re-occupied the territory that had been lost to the KaḶabhras. He has been identified in the earlier part of the present study as Rājasimha I (Tēr Māran). This king is said to have established relationship with a Gaṅgarāja. That this was a marriage relationship is clear from the exploits of Mārangāri, the *aṇatti* of the charter, who fought against the Gaṅgas and on the occasion secured the daughter of Gaṅgarāja and offered her to the Pāṇḍya king, “Koṅgarkōn”, that is, Rājasimha.

The desire to possess the Koṅgu country appears to have been a long cherished plan of the Pāṇḍyas and perhaps the reverse was true of the Gaṅgas as well. From the time of the Gaṅga king Durvinīta (555-605 A.D.) parts of the modern Coimbatore and bordering Salem districts constituting Punnāṭa was in the control of the Gaṅgas (Arokiaswami, 1956); in fact, Durvinīta is called the “Lord of Punnāṭa”. Śivamāra (680-725) divided the

kingdom into different units and distributed them amongst the members of the royal family; one such unit came into the hands of Śrīpuruṣa. This line of Gaṅgas appears to have allied itself with the Chālukyas and opposed the westward incursions of the Pallavas and northward incursions of the Pāṇḍyas. Fights between the Gaṅgas (either with or without Chālukyan alliance) and Pāṇḍyas along the borderline were of frequent occurrence.

Śrīpuruṣa was the Gaṅga contemporary of Rājasimha I. It must be during one of these encounters that the Gaṅga king wielded the upper hand and overran a part of the northern border areas of the Pāṇḍya territory, causing destruction of some of the towns and forts. Rājasimha lost no time in repairing and rebuilding the badly hit ramparts at Madurai, Karūr and Woraiyūr. Then he marched on to reconquer the land that had been occupied by the Gaṅgas (Kaḷabhra). The composer of the Vēlvikuḍi grant has described this exploit of Rājasimha with great gusto. Several of the places mentioned lie in the Pudukōṭṭai-Tanjāvūr-Tiruchi areas. He did not stop at this but crossed the river Kāvēri and advanced in the northwest direction into the Koṅgu country which was at that time being ruled by the Gaṅgas. He subdued them and even occupied Pāṇḍikkoḍumuḍi, obviously with the intention of putting an end to their possible repeat attacks on the Pāṇḍya territory. It is at this juncture that he entered into a matrimonial alliance with the Gaṅga kings by marrying a princess from their house. As if celebrating this victorious campaign, he performed "countless" *gōsahasras*, *hiraṇyagarbhas* and *tulābhāras* and in a mood of thanks-giving "prostrated at and worshipped the lotus feet of Paśupati" at Pāṇḍikkoḍumuḍi.

### (c) *Pallavas and Kaḷabhras/Gaṅgas*

The Kāsakuḍi plates (SII, II, No. 73) of Nandivarman II Pallavamalla issued in A.D. 753 mention that Simhaviṣṇu destroyed his enemy, the Kaḷabhras, among others. That the Gaṅga king Durvinīta was a contemporary of Simhaviṣṇu is evidenced both by epigraphical and literary sources (Subramaniam, 1966; Mahalingam, 1969). Fights and intrigues between the Gaṅgas and Pallavas, with their territories positioned adjacent to each other,

had already commenced during this period. This is evidenced from the records of the Gaṅgas also. It is stated that Durvinita became victorious over a Kāḍuveṭṭi ruler who "shone like an image of Rāvaṇa" (EC. VIII. Nagar 35). The Sirgunda inscription (EC. VI. Chikmagalur 50) informs us that the younger son of Nirvinita was enthroned by a Kāḍuveṭṭi. This could have been possible subsequent to the occupation of some part of the Gaṅga country by the Pallava, thereby establishing the newly acquired land under the rule of the enemy king as a subordinate.

The details of the Pallava-Chālukya-Gaṅga relationships in the middle of the seventh century are yet to be clarified. In any case, it is clear that the Gaṅga relationship with the Pallava Narasimhavarman I was not on friendly terms. The Kūram plates of Paramēśvaravarman I (SII. I. No. 151) mention Kaḣabhras as one of the enemies conquered by Narasimhavarman. This Gaṅga kings Polavira (A.D. 629-644) and Śrīvikrama (A.D. 644-669) were the contemporaries of Narasimhavarman, who is said to have conquered the Kaḣabhras repeatedly. Although the Gaṅga records of this period are not eloquent about their encounters with the Pallavas, they do imply a not too friendly relationship. It appears to be certain that "Gaṅgavaḍi was harnessed by the invading armies of the Pallavas" (Krishna Rao, 1936). Some *Virakkals* (hero-stones) of this period in the Gaṅga territory refer to a battle between Gaṅgas and Pallavas fought at Kovalāla (Kolar) (MAR. 1910, p. 16; EC. IX. Hosakote 21, 22). Whether the Pallavas were victorious is, however, not certain. As Kolār and Tumkur districts were still in the hands of the Gaṅgas during the reign of Śrīpuruṣa, either the Pallavas should have been driven out or, if they had been successful, it should have been a provisional one. It is interesting to note in this connection that the Gaṅgas of this period had already split themselves into at least two branches. One branch, headed by Śrīvikrama, continued to represent the main line and took the side of the Chālukyas in fighting against the Pallavas. The other, led by Muṣkara or/and Polavira, detached itself and fought the Chālukyas as an ally of the Pallavas.

Mutual enmity between the Gaṅgas and Pallavas continued in the time of Nandivarman II Pallavamalla (A.D. 731-796). His earlier regnal years were largely spent in suppressing his internal rivals and external opportunists (Mahalingam, 1969). The Puḷḷūr and Paṭṭamaṅgalam plates issued by him respectively in A.D. 763 and A.D. 792 give long lists of the enemies whom he is supposed to have conquered. Whether all these encounters represent actual victories or routine hyperboles of the composers is difficult to judge. The Puḷḷūr plates (EI. XXXVI. No. 20) refer both to the Kaḷabhras and Gaṅgas as parties conquered by Nandivarman. If this is taken to be a fact, then it is likely that the Kaḷabhras should represent the Pallava-opponent branch of the Gaṅgas, that is, the main line itself. The Paṭṭamaṅgalam plates (EI. XVIII. No. 14) do not refer to the Gaṅgas but only to the Kaḷabhras.

The regnal years of the Gaṅga king Śrīpuruṣa (A.D. 728-788) overlaps to a large extent the period of Nandivarman. The Tāṇḍanttoṭṭam plates (SII. II. No. 99) issued by the latter king record that he snatched a bejewelled necklace called Ugrodāya from a Gaṅga ruler. Although this inscription does not refer to the name of the king, the surmise that it should have been Śrīpuruṣa cannot be far-fetched. It is also possible that when the Chālukya king Vikramāditya II was fighting against Nandivarman II Pallavamalla, a branch of the Gaṅgas helped the Chālukyas; a side effect of this encounter was the minor battles between the Gaṅga and Pallava armies and it is probable that the Gaṅgas were defeated during such encounters.

Thus from a broad point of view it is clear that from the time of Simhaviṣṇu and Durvīṇṭa, for a period of nearly 200 years through Nandivarman Pallavamalla and Śrīpuruṣa, the Pallava-Gaṅga relationships were by no means cordial. Although a minor branch of the Gaṅgas aligned itself with the Pallavas, the major branch was continuously involved in opposing the Pallavas either singly or in alliance with the Western Chālukyas. During some of these encounters the Pallavas were the victors, but that the Gaṅgas also should have been in the same category

on some occasions cannot be denied. It may also be noted that the record references to the Kaḷabhra in the Pallava inscriptions relate to different generations of the Gaṅgas—Durvinīta Polavīra and Śrīvikrama, and Śrīpuruṣa; also, that the locale of encounters varied in all likelihood.

(d) *Western Chālukyas and Kaḷabhras/Gaṅgas*

The Nerūr copper plates of Vijayāditya (IA. IX. p. 127) mentions that Vikramāditya I conquered the Kaḷabhras along with the Pāṇḍyas, Cōḷas and others. The Mahākūṭa pillar inscription of Pulakēśin I (IA. XIX. p. 7) no doubt informs us that Kīrtivarman I subdued the Gaṅgas and Āḷupas. The Gaṅga contemporary of Kīrtivarman was Durvinīta and his records do not bear any testimony of his having been subjugated by the Chālukyas. The truth of the incidents mentioned in these inscriptions has been seriously doubted (Lakshminarayana Rao and Panchamukhi, 1946; Nilakanta Sastri, 1960).

Vinayāditya (Harihar grant, 1A, VII. p. 301) and Kīrtivarman II (Vakkaleri grant, EI, V. No. 22) also are stated to have defeated the Kaḷabhras. It is a well-documented fact that the main line of Gaṅgas were feudatories of the Chālukya power as early as the time of Pulakēśin II and their position was not different during the succeeding periods. The Chālukyan inscriptions do not go beyond mentioning the term Kaḷabhra amongst the numerous dynasties that they claim to have subjugated. On the Gaṅga side also there is no corroborative evidence to presume that they were actually defeated by the Chālukyas. Although there appears to be a vague suggestion in the Gaṅga history that Muṣkara and Polavīra could have entered into conflict with the Chālukyas, confirmatory evidence is lacking. Under these circumstances, until more positive evidence becomes available, the Chālukyan claims of having subjugated the Gaṅgas are to be looked upon largely as “embellishments by court poets which should be considered as such by the historian, and not treated as serious records of facts” (Nilakanta Sastri, 1960).

*(e) Kadambas and Kaḷabhōras/Gaṅgas*

The Halmidi inscription of Kākutsavarman (MAR. 1936, No. 16) describes the donor as the enemy of Kaḷabhōra. The Government Archaeologist writes that "the name (kaḷabhōra) is not clearly visible and the reading of the three middle letters is doubtful. The nearest reading possible is Kaḷabhōranā which is the genetive for the ruler of Kaḷabhōra which may be identified with Kaḷabhra." It is unfortunate that there is no other record of the Kaḷambas which mentions this word and as such there is no provision for verifying the reading. However, even if the word is presumed to refer to the Kaḷabhras, there is no necessity to assume that it denotes a territory as proposed by the Government Archaeologist. On the contrary, if Kaḷabhōra/Kaḷabhra is indicative of a dynasty, than we may not be far wrong in implying that Kākutsavarman was an enemy of the Gaṅgas.

*(f) A note on the Kaḷappāḷars*

The chronologically late nature of the literary references to the Kaḷappāḷars has already been referred to. By the time the authors composed their respective works, a couple of centuries had passed away after the Gaṅga incursion into the Pāṇḍya territory by which time the incident lingered on as a hazy legend. The poets superimposed their imagination on the contemporary legends, created new names of kings, fabricated events and successfully wove stories bearing a semblance to historicity. It is unfortunate that students of history should have uncritically accepted these sources as the starting point for the resolution of the Kaḷabhra problem. In result, as we have seen, the cart has been placed before the horse, thereby obstructing the venue for the identification of the Kaḷabhras.

The only historical element in all the literary sources appears to be the vague references to some exotic stock of people called Kaḷappāḷars who were in occupation of certain part of the Tamiḷakam during some remote period. If the problem is approached with Kaḷabhra as the starting point, it becomes clear that they were no other than the Gaṅgas. In course of time, the Samskr̥t word Kaḷabhra became corrupted in the Tamiḷ literary idiom as Kaḷappāḷar.

After the KaḶabhras/Gaṅgas were driven out of the occupied territory by Rājasimha I, it is likely that a few of them stayed on in the Tamiḷakam for generations and the descendents were designated as Kaḷappār or Kaḷappālar by the indigenous people. The descendents soon merged themselves with the Tamiḷians so completely, that their original Gaṅga identity was lost. The odium attached to them is solely due to the misinterpretation of certain words and incidents occurring in the Vēḷvikuḍi charter, and also to the purely fanciful stories created by the authors of *Yāpparun-kalakkārikai* and *Tamiḷ Nāvalar Caritai*. Having full faith on such misleading data Doraswami Pillai (1968) has offered ponderous and puerile arguments to deny the KaḶabhra-ancestry of Meykkaṇḍār, the author of Śivagṇānabōdam. If it is true that Aḷḷuṭa Kaḷappālar was the father of Meykkaṇḍār, then nothing is gained by denying that he was of Gaṅga infiltration. The personal names, Kaḷappālan, Kaḷappāḷappillai, etc., and place names like Kaḷappārmēḍu, are nothing but the relics of stray instances of the Gaṅgas in the Tamiḷnāḍ.

#### Impact of the "KaḶabhra interregnum"

Naṟkoṭṭan, the recipient of the village Vēḷvikuḍi "who had never transgressed from the path of *śrutis*" was the one who suffered the worst by losing the enjoyment of the grant following the KaḶabhra occupation. When opportunity arose, he complained to the king about the injustice to which he was subjected. This he did in a tone overcome with emotion. Although such an act may appear to reflect a lack of restraint on a strict follower of *Śrutis*, his reference to the intruders was by no means vituperative; with dignity he called them 'fearless'. However, advantage is taken of some wrongly translated words of the Vēḷvikuḍi inscription by modern authors to permanently condemn the KaḶabhras as being wicked cruel, ignoble, evil, etc.

Until the nineteen forties, the "KaḶabhra interregnum" was looked upon as just one of the little known events in the history of Tamiḷakam, and none of the authors indulged themselves in discussing the after effects of the interregnum. All efforts of the students of history were largely directed towards elucidating the



dynastic affinities of the intruders. Krishnaswami Aiyangar (1935), while discussing the Kaḷabhra problem, observed that "They were people, intruders into the country of the Pāṇḍyas, who upset the order things long established.....". Nilakanta Sastri had refrained himself from expressing opinions of this kind in his earlier writings; but in later years (1947-1955) offered the following pronouncements :—

".....a mysterious and ubiquitous enemy of civilization, the evil rulers.....upset the established political order....."

".....the Kaḷabhras are roundly denounced as evil kings (*kali-arasar*) who uprooted many *ādhirājas* and abrogated *brahmadēya* rights.

.....The Çoḷas disappeared from the Tamiḷ land almost completely in this debacle....."

The tragic consequences of such statements, which, however, we have learnt by now are baseless, is seen in the highly exaggerated and prejudiced versions propounded by subsequent writers. The Kaḷabhras were begun to be looked upon as a dynasty or clan which was wholly opposed to the culture of the Tamiḷakam; the single instance of their having abrogated Vēlvikuḷi was magnified to mean that they destroyed all of the then existing religious endowments and institutions. Imagination was overstrained to conclude that their incursion forced in a new order. Rigmurlic woes were poured forth that, as a result, the Tamiḷ language, Tamiḷ literature, Tamiḷ music, Tamiḷ drama, Tamiḷ culture, everything Tamiḷ and everything were wiped out of existence (Doraswami Pillai, 1954, 1968; Sadasiva Pandarattar, 1957). Vigorous assertions were made that the Third Tamiḷ 'Çaṅkam' of Madurai—itsself a figment of imagination—was destroyed by the Kaḷabhras; that Pāli language replaced Tamiḷ and Buddhist literature alone received encouragement (Sadasiva Pandarattar, 1957). It is unfortunate that such information is being indoctrinated into the young minds through prescribed text books (Adaikkalasami, 1968). Similar opinions, although with much reduced emphasis and involvement, have been expressed by Subrahmanian (1966) and Soundara Rajan (1968).

All this could have perhaps looked plausible only in (i) a 'Caṅkam' had been in existence during the first three centuries A.D. and (ii) the Kaḷabhras were in occupaion of the Tamiḷakam (Cēra, Coḷa, and Pāṇḍya territories) for the next three centuries. As explained earlier, the first opinion is based on unsound and *a priori* assumptions and assertions; and the second on a series of misreadings and misconceptions of epigraphic and literary sources. The fact is that the Kaḷabhras, that is, the Gaṅgas, were frequently in military encounters against their neighbours, the Pallavas and the Pāṇḍyas. These battles were largely of the nature of borderline encroachments on either side, each holding ground of the occupied land temporarily until the counter attack of the opponent. The military marches of the Pallavas and Gaṅgas from the time of Simhaviṣṇu and Durvinīta through Nandivarman II Pallavamalla and Śrīpuruṣa were of this kind. The encounters between the Pāṇḍya Rājasimha I and the Gaṅga Śrīpuruṣa were also of a similar kind, but covered a wider extent. Yet the period of the Gaṅga occupation of the Pāṇḍya terrain was short-lived, because Rājasimha himself reclaimed the lost land by driving the Gaṅgas back into their own territory; while so doing he even encroached into the opponents dominion as far as Koḍumuḍi.

Such being the facts of the case, how could the Gaṅga invasion of a small part of the Pāṇḍya country, that too for a brief period not extending perhaps beyond a couple of years, cause the destruction of the Tamiḷ everything and everything Tamiḷ? How could they be supposed to have "upset the established political order" or implant a new culture? After all, just as the Gaṅgas, the Pāṇḍyas also were followers of Śaivism. The kings of both the dynasties patronized Brāhmanical rituals and religion; they were also tolerant towards Jainism. Both adopted Samskr̥t titles and freely used this language in their inscriptions in addition to their respective regional languages. The only difference that could have caused cultural incompatibility was the Kannaḍa language of the Gaṅgas and the Tamiḷ of the Pāṇḍyas. But there is no evidence of these languages having fought with each other at any time in history.

The period of Gaṅga occupation of the Pāṇḍya land cannot be considered to have caused an interregnum. They had absolutely no part in bringing the so-called 'Caṅkam' age to an end, even if such an age ever existed at all.

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## APPENDIX

(The following text of the Vēlvikuḍi copper-plate grant is the reading given by Krishna Sastri (1923/4). The translation is almost wholly a reproduction of Krishna Sastri's rendering, excepting for the incorporation of the suggestions offered in the present study).

## TEXT

## First Plate

- 1 Śriyañ=chiram vaś=śiśir-āmśu-śēkharaś=śiva(ḥ\*) śrit-  
āratti-pratibandha-kāraṇam (1\*) tanōtu sauvarṇṇa-kapa-
- 2 rdda-sundaraḥ=kudarppa-kandarppa-mada-pramarddanaḥ (1\*)  
viśvambharā-bhara-śrānta-śēsha-viśrama-kāraṇam (1\*) ā-
- 3 kalp-āntam=bhuvi sthēyād=anvayaḥ=pāṇḍya-bhūbhṛitām (2\*)  
Astambhayat=kshiti-dharam=pravijṛimbhamāṇam=ambha-
- 4 s=samstam=apibaj=jaladheś=cha yas=sah (1\*) Kumbh-  
[odbhavo  
bhavati yasya munih=purōdhas=sa śri-nidhi-
- 5 r-jjavati Pāṇḍya-narēndra-vamśaḥ (3\*) Asthad-apratima-  
prabhāva-mahitah-Pāṇḍy-ābhidhanō nidhē-
- 6 r=vvāradhvāri mahipatis=tribhuvanē linē=pi kalpa-  
kshayāt (1\*) Dhātrā sṛisṭavatā punas=sa
- 7 jagatām rakshārtham=abhyarthitas=tējasvi tanayatvam=ētya  
śaśinō nāmnā Budh=ākhyo-bhavat (4\*)

## Second Plate—first side

- 8 Putras=tasya Purūravā bhuja-bala-pradhvasta-daityah=  
prabhus=tad-vamśē ŚikharIndra-mastaka-śi-
- 9 lā-vinyasta-matsya-dvayē (1\*) Śakr-ārddh-āsana-hāra-  
bhāji śaraṇē viśvāsya viśvambharā-gēha.
- 10 svāmini śāśvatē yudhi jit-āśēsh-āmar-āri-prabhau (5\*)  
Dūtibhūta-divōkasikshitidhara-kshu-
- 11 bdh-abhisamkshobhita-kshir-ōdanvati Kumbha-sambhava-  
kara-prāpt-ābhishēka-kriyē (1\*) ishṭ-ārth-ārppaṇa-
- 12 tarppit-ārthi-janat-āpūrṇa-kshamā-maṇḍalē janm=  
āvāpa jagatray-ārchchita-guṇa(ḥ) śri-Māravarmmā nri-  
B-17

- 13 paḥ (6\*) Dharaṇī-valayaṁ samastam=ētam=nija-dorddaṇḍa-  
mah-ōragṇābibhṛit (1\*) aharat=sa bhu-  
14 jaṁgam-ādhibhartuṣ=chira-kāl-ōdvahana-klaman=  
[dharayah (7\*)]  
Adhiruhya tulām-a-mitra-varggaṁ-yudhi ji-

### Second Plate—second side

- 15 tv=Āmṛita-garbbhato janitvā, (1\*) sudhiyām=adhipas=  
suvarṇṇa-rāsīm vidhivat=sapratipādayām=babhūva (8\*)  
Tasy=ā-  
16 nmajas-taruṇa-bhāskara-tulya-tēja rājā babhūva Rāṇadhira  
iti pratitaḥ (1\*) yō līlay=aiva bhuvana-  
17 sya babhāra bhāraṁ hāraṁ yath=āsyā guravas=  
[suranāyakasya (9\*)]  
Putras=tasya Purandara-pratikṛitir-bhū-  
18 sundarī-vallabhō namr-āsēsha-narēndra-vēshṭana-mapi-  
vrāt-āvṛit-āmghri-dvayaḥ (1\*) āsit=satya-sakhah=pa-  
19 rākrama-dhanah=patmāsanāyāḥ=patir=vvidy-āchāra-  
vibhūshana(h) śruta-(dha)ra(h) śrī-Māravarmm-ābhidhaḥ  
(10\*) Sa Rāja-  
20 sīmhas=sarasīruh-ākshō bhayam bhuvi prāṇa-bhṛitām=  
apāsyā (1\*) rarakshadakshaḥ kshapit-āri-paksha-  
21 h=kshamātalaṁ kshmā-patir=akshat-ājñāḥ (11\*) Naro  
nu Rakshō nu Harōnu Pūrushah-parō nu Śakrō nu

### Third Plate—first side

- 22 sarōsham=āgataḥ (1\*) iti (sma) matvā yudhi yam=  
bhay-ā(rddi)taḥ=(pa)lāyatē (Pallava)malla-bhūpa-  
23 tiḥ (12\*) Kanaka-garbbha-krita-prasavaḥ=punas=  
samadhiruhya tulām=atulām=api (1\*) akira(t=ā)-  
24 rttham=apākṛita-kalmashō dvija-daridra-sur-āyatanē=shu  
yaḥ (13\*) Māhākulinām=Maḷav-ēndra-(ka)-  
25 nyām sa Māravarmmā sadraśim-uvāha (1\*) ajāyat=āsyām  
Hara-sūnu-kalpō jagad-dhitārtthañ-Jaṭi-  
26 l-ābhidhāuaḥ (14\*) Aśishat-sa dharām=ahina-sārah-  
kshitipah-kshālita-kalmash-ānushaṁgam (1\*) natarā-



- 27 jaka-mauli-ranna-raśmi-prakar-ābhyarchchita-pāda-  
patma piṭhaḥ (15\*) Kalayē sa guṇān=adat=Kṛitasya  
28 sva-bhujābhyām sura-pādapa-svabhāvam (1\*) abhayam  
śaraṇāgata-prajābhyas=sa divam samyati śa-

### Third Plate—second side

- 29 tru-pārtthivēbhyaḥ (16\*) Rājatām sa mahipāla-kiriṭ-  
ārppita-śāsanāḥ (1\*) Rājasimha-suto rā-  
30 jā chiram=urvyām=Parāntakaḥ (17\*) I-prasasti Sarvvakratu-  
yāji āgiya Varōdaya-Bhaṭṭanār-che-  
31 yyappaṭṭadu—Kol-yāṇai-palav-ōṭṭi-kkūḍā-maṇṇar-  
kuḷān-tavi  
32 rttā Palyāga-Mudukuḍumi-pPeruvaḷudi eṇṇum  
[Pāṇḍyādhirājanā=  
33 ṇāga-mā-malar-chchōlai-naḷir-śiṇaimiśai-vaṇḍ-alambum  
Pāganūr-  
34 kkūḷram-eṇṇum paḷana-kkiḍakkai-nir-nāṭṭu-chchoṛkaṇṇālar-  
śo-  
35 lappaṭṭa śrutimārggam-piḷaiyāda Koṛkai-kiḷā-Naṛkoṇṇaṇ kōṇ-  
36 ḍa vēḷvi muḡruvikka kēḷvi-andaṇālar muṇbu kēṭka eṇṇ=eḍut-

### Fourth Plate—first side

- 37 t-uraittu vēḷviśālai-muṇbu niṇṇu Vēḷvikuḍi eṇṇ=a-  
ppadiyai=chchī-  
38 rōḍu tiru-vaḷara-chcheydār (||\*) Vēndaṇ-appoḷudēy  
nirōḍ-āṭṭi-kkoḍuttamai-  
39 yā-niḍu-bhukti tuttapinṇ (||\*)=Aḷavariya ādhirājarai  
agala nikki agal-iḍittai=  
40 kKaḷabhraṇ-eṇṇun-Kali-araiśaṇ kaikkōṇḍ-adaṇai iṛakkiya-  
pin (||\*) Paḍu-kaḍaṇ-muḷai  
41 tta parudi-pōla Pāṇḍyādhirājan vēḷirpaṭṭu viḍu-kadir-  
avir-oli vilaga viṇṇi-  
42 rundu vēlai-sūḷnda-viyal-idattu=kkōvun=kuṇumbum  
pāvudaṇ murukki-chche-  
43 ākōl=ōchchi vēṇ-kuḍai-niḷar-rang-ōḷi-nirainda Taraṇi-  
maṅgaiyai-ppiṇar-

- 44 pāl-urimai tiravidi=ṇikki-ttaṇpāl urimai naṇṇaṇam=  
amaitta māṇam-pē-
- 45 rtta-tāṇai-vēndaṇṇ = oḍunga-maṇṇar-oḷi-nagar=aḷitta  
Kaḍungōṇ=ēṇṇuṇ=kadi-
- 46 r-vēr-Renṇēṇ (||\*) Maṇṇ=avaṇku magaṇ-āgi mahitalam  
podu-nikki Malar-mangai(y)-o-

#### Fourth Plate—second side

- 47 ḍu maṇaṇ=ayarnda arṇam-il-aḍar-vēr-rāṇai-Ādhirājaṇ  
Avaṇichūḷāmaṇi etti-
- 48 ṇattum=igal-aḷikku=matta-yāṇai Māravarman (||\*) Maṇṇ-  
avaṇku maruv=iṇiya oru-magaṇ-ā
- 49 gi Maṇ-magaḷai maṇu=kkaḍindu vikramattiṇ veḷiṇpaṭṭu  
vilaṇḡal-vel-pe-
- 50 ṇi-vēndar-vēndaṇ śilai-ttaḍa-kkai=kkolai-kkaḷiṇṇu=  
chCheḷiyaṇ Vāṇavaṇ
- 51 śēṇkōṇ-Chēndaṇ (||\*) Maṇṇ=avaṇku=ppaḷippu-iṇṇi vaḷi-ttoṇṇi  
Udayagiri-madhyama-
- 52 tt=urū-śuḍar-pōla=tteṇṇ-ēṇṇu diśai naḍuṇḡa maṇṇ=avaṇ  
veḷiṇpaṭṭu-chchū
- 53 ḷi-yāṇai śelav=undi=pPāḷivāy=amar-kaḍandu Vilvēli-  
kkaḍar-rāṇaiyai
- 54 Nelvēli-chcheru veṇṇum viravi-vand-aḍaiyāda Paravarai=  
ppāl-paḍut
- 55 tum=aṇukkāl-inam puḍai tiḷaikkūṇ-Kuṇṇāṭṭavar-kulaṇ-  
keḍuttu-
- 56 ṇ-kai-nnalatta-kaḷiṇ=undi=chChennilattu-chcheru veṇṇum  
pār-aḷavun=

#### Fifth Plate—first side

- 57 (ta)ni-chcheṇkōṇ-Kēraḷaṇai=ppala-mu(ṇaiyum-urimai)-  
chchurṇam(oḍ=avar-yā)ṇai-
- 58 (y)um puriśai-mmadiṇ-Puliyūr=ppaga-ṇāḷigai iṇa(v)āmai  
iga(l-ā)-
- 59 ḷi(y)uḷ veṇṇu koṇḍum vel-āḷi(y)um viyaṇ-paṇambum=  
ēlāmai śēṇ-

- 60  $r = erind = alittum$  Hiranyagarbhamun = Tulābharamun =  
daraṇimiśai-ppala śey(du)
- 61 antaṇarkkum aśaktarkkum vand = aṇaiga eṇr = itt = alitta  
makarikai-aṇi-maṇi-
- 62 neḍu-muḍi-Arikēsari Asamasaman śrī-Māravarmman (||\*)  
Maṇṇ-avaṇku magaṇ-āgi-kkoṇṇa-vē-
- 63 l valaṇ-ēndi = pporud = ūruṇ-kaḍaṇ-ṇāṇaiyai Marudūruṇ  
māṇb = alitt = Āyavē-
- 64 lai agappaḍa ey = eṇṇāmai erind = alittu-chCheṇḡoḍi(y)um  
Pudāṇ(kō)ṭ-
- 65 tuṇ-cheru veṇṇ-avar-śiṇan = tavirttu = kkoṇḡ-alarun-naṇum-  
poḷilvāy = kku-
- 66 (y)i(lo)ḍu ma(y)il = agavu-Maṇḡalapuram = ennum mahā-nagaruṇ  
Mahāratharai e-

## Fifth Plate—second side

- 67 rind = alitt = aṇai-kaḍal-valāgam podu-moḷi agaṇṇi =  
chchilai(y)um puli(y)um
- 68 kayaluṇ = cheṇṇu nilaiy-amai-neḍu-varai-iḍava(y)iṇ-kiḍāy  
maṇṇ = iṇid-āṇḍa
- 69 taṇṇ-aḷi-chcheṇḡkōṇ-ṇeṇṇa-Vāṇavaṇ Śembiyaṇ Śōḷan  
maṇṇar-maṇṇa(ṇ) madu-
- 70 ra-Karunāḍagaṇ koṇ-ṇaviṇṇa neḍuṇ-chuḍar-vēr-Koṇḡar-  
kōmāṇ kō-chChaḍaiyaṇ (||\*)
- 71 Maṇṇ-avaṇku putraṇāy Maṇ-magaḷadu poruṭṭāga matta-yāṇai  
śelav = undi māna-
- 72 vēl valaṇ-ēndi = kkaḍu-viśaivyāl = edirndavarai Neduvayalvāy  
nigar = aḷi-
- 73 ttu = kkaṇuv-aḍainda maṇattavarai = kKuṇumaḍaivāy = kkūrpp =  
alittu Ma
- 74 ṇṇikurichchi(y)un = Tirumangai(y)u = muṇṇiṇṇavar muraṇ  
alittu mēvalō-
- 75 r-kaḍaṇ-ṇānai(y) oḍ = ēṇṇ = edirēy vandavarai = pPūvalūr =  
ppuṇaṇ-gaṇḍuṇ =
- 76 koḍum-puriśai nneḍuṇ-kiḍaṇḡiṇ = Koḍumbālūr = kkūḍar-kaḍum-

## Sixth Plate—first side

- 77 (y)un = karuñ-kaliguñ = kaḍir-vēliḥ = kaikkonḍuñ = Chēva.....  
(kū)ḍāda Pallavaṇai = k
- 78 Kuḷumbūruṭ = tēś-aḷiya eṇṇ-iḥanda māl-kaligum = ivu(liga)ḷum  
pala kavarn-
- 79 dum tariyalarāy = ttarittavarai = pPeriyalūr-ppīd-aḷittum  
pūviri(y)u-
- 80 m-poḷiḥ-chōlai-kKāviriya = kkaḍandiṭṭ = aḷag-amainda  
vār-śilai(y)in Maḷa Ko-
- 81 āgam = aḍippaḍuttu mīṇḍ = oḷiya-maṇi-imaikkum = eḷil-amainda  
neḍum-pu-
- 82 riśai = pPāṇḍikkoḍumuḍi śeṇṇ = eydi = pPaśupatiyadu panma-  
pādam paṇind = ē-
- 83 tti = kkanaka-rāśi(y)uñ = kaḍir-maṇi(y)um mana-maḡaḷa =  
kkuḍuttiṭṭun-koṅga-
- 84 r-van-naḡun-kaṇṇi-kGaṅga-rājaṇḍu sambandañ = cheydum  
eṇṇirandaṇa Gō-
- 85 sahasramum Hiraṇyagarbhamun = Tulābhāramum maṇṇiṇmīśai =  
ppala śeydu ma-
- 86 ḡai-nāviṇōr kuḡai-ttirttuñ-Kūḍal Vañji Kōḷi eṇṇu = māḍa-  
mā-madi-

## Sixth Plate—second side

- 87 l pudukki(y)um = aḡai-kaḍal-valagañ-kuḡaiyād = āṇḍa maṇṇar-  
maṇṇa(ṇ) = Reṇṇavar-muruga-
- 88 ṇmāṇa-veṇ-kuḍaimāṇ = Rēr = Māḡaṇ (||\*) Maḡṇ = avaḡku magāṇ-  
āḡi Māl-uruviṇ veliḡpa-
- 89 ṭṭu = kkoḡṇa-mūṇṇ = uḍaṇ = iyamba = kkuḷir-veṇ-kuḍai maṇ kāppa  
Pū-maḡaḷum Pu-
- 90 la-maḡaḷum Nā-maḡaḷum = nalaṇ = etta = kKali-araiśaṇ vali  
taḷara = ppoliṇḍu vi-
- 91 ḡṇirundu kuruñ-kaḍal-uḍutta peruṅgaṇ-ñāḷattu nāḡ-perum-  
[padai(y)um pā
- 92 ḡpada = pparappi = kkarudādu vand = edir-malainda Kāḍavaṇai =  
kkāḍ-aḍaiya = ppū-vi-

- 93 ri(y)um-puṇar-kāḷani-kKāviri(y)iṇ-reṇkaraimēṇ=raṇṇ-  
āgam-malar-chchōlai-
- 94 pPeṇṇāgaḍatt=amar venṇun=ti-vāy-a(y)il=ēndi=tṭiḷaitṭ=  
edirēy van-
- 95 d=iṇutta Āyavōḷai(y)uṇ-Kuṇbarai(y)um=aḍal-amaruḷ=  
aḷitt=ōṭṭi=kKāṭṭu-
- 96 (k)kuṇumbu seṇṇ-aḍaiya Nāṭṭukkuṇumbiṇ=cheru v(e)ṇṇum=  
aṇai-kaḍal-vaḷā-

#### Seventh Plate—first side

- 97 gam=oru-moḷi=kkoḷiya śilai-mali-taḍa-kkai-Tenṇa-Vāṇavan  
avaṇē-
- 98 y Śrīvaran Śrī-manōharan Śiṇachchōḷan Puṇappūḷiyan  
vītakanmashan
- 99 vinayaviśrutan vikramaparākan virapurōkan marudbalan  
mānyaśāsanān Manūpaman
- 100 mardditavīran giristhiran gītikinnaran kṛipālayan  
kṛitāpatānan Kalippagai kaṇḍa
- 101 kanishṭuran kāryadatshīṇan kārṇmukha-Pārtthan Parāntakan  
Paṇḍitavatsalan paṇipūṇṇan pā-
- 102 pabbīru kurai-uṇu-kaḍar-paḍai-ttāṇai-guṇagriḥyan  
gūḍhaniṇiṇṇayan nirai-uṇu-mala
- 103 r-maṇi-niṇ-muḍi-Nēriya(r)kōṇ=Neḍuñjaḍaiya(n) (||\*)  
Maṇṇ=avaṇṇan rājyavatsalan mūṇṇā-

#### Seventh Plate—second side

- 104 vadu śelāṇiṇpa āṇḡ=oru-māṇ-māḍa-ma-maḍiṇ-Kūḍar-pāḍu  
niṇṇavar ā-
- 105 krōdhikka=kkoṇṇavaṇēy maṇṇ=avarai=tterreṇa nāṇḡ  
kūvi eṇṇēy nuṇ=kūṇai
- 106 eṇṇu muṇṇāga=ppaṇitt-arula mō-ṇā=ṇiṇ-kuravarār=  
pāṇ-muṇai(y)iṇ va-
- 107 ḷuvāmai māgan-tōy=malar-chchōlai=pPāṇṇūr-kkūṇṇattu=  
ppaḍuvadu
- 108 āḷa-tāṇai-aḍal-vēndēy Vēḷvikūḍi eṇṇum piyar-uḍaiyadu o-

- 109 Igāda vēṛ-rānai(y)od-ōda-vēli uḍaṇ kātta Palyāga-  
Mudukuḍumi-
- 110 pPeruvaludi eṇṇum Paramēśvāraṇār Vēlvikuḍi eṇṇappaṭṭadu
- 111 kēlviyir=ṛarappaṭṭadanai=ttuḷakkam-illā kaḍar-  
rāṇaiy=āya Kaḷabhra-
- 112 rāl=iṛakkappaṭṭadu eṇṇu ṇiṇṇavaṇ vijñāpyaṇ=cheyya  
ṇaṇṇu ṇaṇṇ=eṇṇu
- 113 muṇuvalittu nāṭṭā=nin-paḷamaiyādal kātṭi nī  
(koḷgav=eṇ)ṇa nāṭṭ(ā)ṛ=raṇ

## Eighth Plate—first side

- 114 paḷamaiyādal kātṭiṇāṇ=aṅg-appaḷudēy kātṭa mē-ṇāl=  
e(ṇ)-kura-
- 115 varār-pāṇmuṛai(y)ir-ṛarappaṭṭadai emmālun=tarap-  
paṭṭad=eṇṇu śe-
- 116 mmāṇd=avaṇ=eḍutt-aruḷi viṛ-kai-ttaḍa-kkai-viṛal-  
vōṇḍaṇ Koṛkai-kīla-
- 117 n Kāmakkāṇi Naṛchiṇḡaṛku=ttēr-ōḍuṇ=kaḍar-rāṇaiyāṇ=  
ṇiṛōḍ=aṭṭik(ko)-
- 118 ḍuttamai(y)iṇ maṛṛ-idaṛku-pperu-nāṅg-ellai terṛena  
viritt=uraip-
- 119 piṛ-pugar-aṇu-poḷin-maruṅ-uḍutta Nagarūr-ellaikkum  
mēkkum mṛṛ=idaṛkku=
- 120 tt(e)ṇ ellai Kuḷandaivaṇ-kūḷvandai-śe(y) kkuṇ-  
Kaḷandai-kkuḷattil=ālukk(u)
- 121 vaḍakkum maṛṛ-idaṛku mēl-ellai aṛṛam-illā=  
kKoṛṛaṇputtū(r)r-Oḍumaiy-i-
- 122 ruppai-chchey-iḍai mṛṛalalai=pperuppiṛku--gkīlakkum  
maṛṛ=idaṛku vaḍapā-

## Eighth Plate—second side

- 123 l-el(lai kāya)luṭ-kamalam malarum Pāyaluḷ vaḍapalai=  
pperuppiṛku=t-
- 124 teṛkum ivv=iyait(ta) peru-nāṅg-ellaiyir-paṭṭa pūmi  
kāṛāṇmai miyāṭchi

- 125 uḷḷ-aḍaṅga mēi=eṇ-guravarār-kuḍukkappaṭṭa pariṣey  
emmālun-(ko)ḍuk-
- 126 kappattadu (||\*) Maṟṟ=idaṟk=āṇatti kuṟṟam-iṅṟi=  
kkūṟuṅkālai=ffkoṅgar-van-na
- 127 ruṇ-kaṇṇi-kGaṅgarājanadu kanyā-ratnaṁ Koṅgarkoṟku  
kkuṇandu koḍuppa ārp-
- 128 p-aṟā-aḍar-ṟāṇai-pPūrvvarājar pugaṟ=eḷundu vil-  
viravuṇ=kaḍar-ṟāṇai (Va)lḷabhaṇai
- 129 Veṇbaivāy āḷ-amaruḷḷ-aḷind-oḍa vāḷ=amaruḷ=uḍaṇ=  
vavviya ēṇa-ppoṟi
- 130 igal-amaruḷ=idi-urum-eṇa valaṇ-ēnda (malai)tta-tānai-  
Madavikalaṇ maṇṇar-kō-
- 131 ṇ-aruḷir-peṟṟun=kol-valaikkuṁ-vēṟ-ṟānai--ppal-valai-  
kkōn kuṇara-

## Ninth Plate—first side

- 132 ppaṭṭu=ppōr-vandavar-madan=tavirkkuṇ-Karavanda-  
purattavar-ku(la-t)tōṇṇal māv= ēn-
- 133 duṇ=kaḍar-ṟānai-Mūvēndamaṅgalappērarai(ya)n=āgiya  
Vaidyaka-śikhāmaṇi Māraṅgā-
- 134 ri (||\*) I-ppiramaḍēyam-uḍaiya Koṟkai-kilāṇ  
Kāmakkāṇi Śuvaraṇ-Jiṅgaṇ i-
- 135 daṇuḷ mūṅḷil-oṇṇun=tanakku vaitt=iraṇḍu-kūṟum aimpadiṇvar  
Brāhma-
- 136 ṇarkku nīroḍ=aṭṭi=kkōḍuttāṇ (|\*) Idaṇuḷ Mūrtti  
Eyīṇaṇ śavai(y)oḍ-o
- 137 ttadu nāṅg-arai-ppaḍāram-uḍaiyaṇa (|\*) Idaṇuṭ=ṭaṇakku  
vaitta oru-kūṟṟilu-
- 138 n-tambimārkkku naṇṇun=taṇ=chirṟappaṇār-makkaḷukku  
āṟum sa-
- 139 bhai(y)oḍ=otta paḍāgāraṇ=koḍuttāṇ (\*) I-ppraśasti pāḍiṇa  
Sēṇāpa-
- 140 ti Ēṇādi ā(y)iṇa Śattaṇ-Chattarku mūṇṇu kūṟṟārum-āy=ṭ-
- 141 taṅgaḷoḍ-otta nāṅgu paḍāgāraṇ=koḍuttār

## Ninth Plate—second side

- 142 ĀsIt=Maṅgalarājō Madhuratarah śāstravit=kavir=  
vvāgmī (|\*) ājñaptir=asya Vaidyaḥ Karavandapur-ā-
- 143 dhivāstavyaḥ (18\*) Ratshān=naraḥ parakṛitau  
[vidadhita vidvān=  
pādā hi Dharmma yaśasaḥ para-
- 144 masya labdha(ḥ) (|\*) Dhātr=aiva srasṭam=akhilam  
bhuvanan=tath=api ratshantri puṇyatatayaḥ prathivīn=  
narēndrā(ḥ) (19\*)
- 145 Na hi bhūmi-pradānād=vai dānam-anyad-viśiṣyatē (|\*)  
na ch=āpi bhūmi-haraṇāt pāpa-
- 146 m-anyad=vidhiyatē (20\*) Dātā daś=ānugrahṇāti yō  
harēd-daśa hanti cha (|\*) atīt-ānāgatā-
- 147 nī-ha kulāni kula-mandana (21\*) Sva-dattām para-  
dattām vā yō harēta vasundharā-
- 148 m (|\*) na tasya (na)rakāt-ghōrād-vidyatē nishkrītiḥ  
kvachit (22\*) Bahubhir-vvasudhā

## Tenth Plate

- 149 dattā bhujyatē h(i) tarādhipaiḥ (|\*) yasya yasya yadā  
bhūm(i)s=tasya ta-
- 150 dā phalam (23\*) chatvārah imē Vaishṇavē Dharmē  
ślokaḥ
- 151 Maṅg=i(da)ṇai=kkāttār malar-aḍi eṇ muḍi mēla eṇṇu  
koṭṭavaṇey paṇi-
- 152 tt-arulī=ttergena=ttāmra-śāsanañ-cheyvittān  
Iyd=eḷudi-
- 153 ṇa Śuttakēśari-pPerumpaṇaikkāraṇukku perumakkaḷ  
aruḷār=peṇṇa-
- 154 du oru illa-vaḷāvum iraṇḍu mā-chchey(y)um oru  
puṇchey(y)u-
- 155 m peṇṇān ivai Yuddhakēśari-pPerumbaṇaikkā(ra)n-  
eḷuttu



## TRANSLATION

(Verse 1) Hail! May Śiva, whose head ornament is the cool-rayed (moon), who is the (primeval) cause for the cessation of the sufferings of the devoted, who is beautiful with matted hair of golden hue, and who crushes the mischievous pride of kandarpa (Cupid), grant you perpetual happiness.

(V. 2) May the line of Pāṇḍya kings, the cause of rest to (the serpent) Śesha who is fatigued by bearing the burden of the Earth (on his heads), prosper on this earth to the end of the *kalpa*.

(V. 3) Victorious is the race of Pāṇḍya kings, the mine of prosperity, whose family priest is the sage (Agastya) born of the pitcher, who stopped the rapidly growing mountain from (*further*) growth, and drank all the waters of the ocean.

(V. 4) There was (*ruling*) at the entrance into the sea a king famed for his matchless prowess, named Pāṇḍya, who, even after the three worlds had disappeared at the end of the *kalpa*, was requested again to rule the worlds by the Creator who created (*these*) anew, and was born as the splendid son of the moon and named Budha.

(Vv. 5 and 6) His son was Purūravas, who crushed the kings of giants by the strength of (*his*) arm; in his family which had engraved the pair of fish (*its crest*) on the topmost rock of the lord of mountains (i.e., Māru); whose (*kings*) shared with Śakra (i.e., Indra) half of his throne and his necklace; which was the asylum of the universe; which was the husband of the earth; which was everlasting; which in battles defeated completely the powerful enemies of gods; whose messengers were the gods; who stirred and churned the milk ocean by the mountain (Mandara); the crowning ceremony (*of whose kings*) was performed by the hand of the pitcher-born (sage Agastya); and which had filled the circle of the earth with supplicants whose hearts were gladdened by the granting of their desires, was born the glorious king Māravarman, whose virtues were praised by the three worlds.

(V. 7) Bearing on his big serpent-like shoulder the whole circle of this earth, he removed the fatigue of the lord of serpents (i.e., Śeṣha), *which had been caused* by the carrying of the earth for a long time.

(V. 8) He, the patron of the learned, conquered enemy crowds in battles and ascended the scales; came out of the nector womb (*of the cow*); and according to rule, gave away heaps of gold.

(V. 9) His son was the king called Raṇadhīra, whose prowess was equal to that of the youthful sun and who bore the burden of the earth as sportively as his ancestors wore the necklace of (Indra), the chief of the gods.

(V. 10) His son was the glorious king named Māravarman, a counterpart of Purandara (Indra); the dear lord of the beautiful lady, earth, whose pair of feet was surrounded by the collection of gems in the crowns of all kings bowing in obeisance; whose friend was truth; whose wealth was prowess; the lord of the goddess of prosperity (Padmāsānā); who was an ornament of learning and good conduct and a depository of sacred knowledge.

(V. 11) That lotus-eyed Rājasimha, the king of the whole earth, driving away the fear of created beings on earth, ably protected the earth unopposed (*after*) destroying the allied enemies.

(V. 12) "Is he Nara (i.e., Arjuna); is he a giant; is he Hara (i.e., Śiva); is he the Primeval Man (Vishṇu); is he Śakra (Indra) come with anger?" thus thinking of him, in the battle—field, the frightened king Pallavamalla runs away (*from him*).

(V. 13) Who being made to born of the womb of the golden (cow) and having again ascended the matchless scales, was freed of (*his*) sins and showered freely (*his*) wealth on Brāhmanas, beggars and temples.

(V. 14) This (*king*) Māravarman suitably married the daughter of the Maḷava king of high birth; and from her was born, for the good of the world, (*the king*) named Jaṭila almost equal to Skanda the son of Śiva.

(V. 15) That king of great strength ruled the earth clearing it of (*all*) associations of corruption; the footstool of his lotus feet was worshipped by the great lustre proceeding from the gems on the crowns of prostrating kings.

(V. 16) I imagine that he lent (*his*) virtues to the Kṛita (golden age); (he lent) to the celestial tree its nature, from his hands; to the subjects who sought refuge (*in him*), his promise of protection; and to the enemy kings on the battle-field, heaven.

(V. 17) May he be long glorious on earth, king Parāntaka, the son of Rājasimha, whose commands are borne on the crowns by rulers of earth.

(L. 30) This *praśasti* was composed by Varodayabhaṭṭa, who was a performer of all sacrifices (*Sarvakratuyājīn*).

(L. 31) Naṅkorraṇ, the headman of Koṅkai, who never transgressed the path of *śrutis* as interpreted by the highly learned (*men*) of the division called Pāganūrkūṅṅam,—a well-watered land of extensive paddy fields, where the beetles buzzed on cool buds in groves blooming with Nāga and the mango (*trees*),—being desirous of completing a (Vedic) sacrifice begun (*by him*), through (the favour of) the ādhiraja of the Pāṇḍyas called Palyāgamudukuḍumi-Peruvaḷudi, who dispersed the crowd of the enemy kings by leading numbers of ferocious elephants (*against them*), the *kēḷvi*-Brāhmanas, in presence (*of the king*) saying “Please hear (O king)” explained the petition (of Naṅkorraṇ), stood in front of the sacrificial hall and blessed that spot to grow in prosperity under the name Vēḷvikudi.

(L. 38) The King at once gave it with libations of water so that the gift may be enjoyed indefinitely.

(L. 39) Then a brave king named Kaḷabhran took possession of the extensive earth driving away numberless great kings (*ādhiraja*) and resumed the (*village mentioned*) above.

(L. 40) Like the sun rising from the expansive ocean, the Pāṇḍyādhirāja, named Kaḍuṅṅon, the lord of the South of sharp

javelin who wore (the cloak of) dignity and was the leader of an army, sprang forth, occupied (the throne), spreading around him the brilliant splendour of (*his*) expanding rays (*prowess*), destroyed the kings of the extensive earth surrounded by the sea together with (their) strongholds and (their) fame, wielded the sceptre (of justice) and removed by his strength the evil destiny of the goddess of Earth whose splendour deserved to be under the shade of (*his*) white umbrella, by terminating by his strength the possession of her under others and establishing her in his own possession in the approved manner and destroyed the shining cities of kings who would not submit to him.

(L. 46) Then came his son Avanichūṭāmaṇi Māḡavarmaṇ, who removed the common ownership of the earth (by making it his own), who was wedded to the goddess (born) of the flower (i.e., Lakshmi), the leader of a faultless army of fighting spearmen, and the infuriated elephant who destroyed by all (*possible*) means the power (of the enemy kings).

(L. 48) Then came his son, a lovely one and incomparable, the just ruler, Śeḷiyaṇ, Vānavaṇ, Śēndaṇ, the lord of the hill-chiefs who throw weapons (dexterously), who removed the spot from the goddess of earth, who became well known by his prowess and who possessed long hands (holding) the bow, and furious elephants.

(L. 51) Then to him (was) born, a son, Arikēsari, Asamasaman śri-Māḡavarman, whose high jewelled crown was adorned with ornamental hangings; who, like the brilliant Sun from the middle of the eastern mountain, came out spreading his rays, causing the quarters to tremble; won the battle at Pāḷi by driving into the field of battle caprisoned elephants; conquered the ocean-like army of Vilvēli in the battle of Nelvēli; destroyed the *Paravas* who did not seek refuge by approaching him; annihilated the race of the people of Kuḡu-nāḡu where crowds of beetls abounded on all sides; won a victory at the battle of Śennilam by driving into battle (a herd of) elephants of strong trunks; conquered many a time during the day, in the terrible battle-field of Puliyūr of strongly fortified walls, the Kēraḷa (king) whose matchless sway (extended) over the whole earth together with (his) near relations and their

elephants and captured them alive; marched against, attacked and destroyed unopposed the sea of weapons, and the high mountains (of that country); performed many times on earth (the gifts called) *hiranya* and *tulābhāra*, and gave (the same) with pleasure to Brāhmanas and the infirm inviting them to come and assemble.

(L. 62) Then (came) his son King Śaḍaiyan, the lord of Koṅgas, whose javelins were long, brilliant and destructive, who was (also called) Teṇṇaṇ Vānavaṇ, Śembiyaṇ, Śōlaṇ, king of kings, the beautiful Karunāṭakan, who, with the victorious javelin in his right (hand), fought and destroyed the glory of the ocean-like army that came forth at Marudūr and captured Āyavēḷ, attacked and destroyed him completely, gained victories in battles at Śēṇḡoḍi and Pudāṇkoḍu and brought his (i.e., Āyavēḷ's) anger to an end; at the great city called Mangalapura, where the peacock danced with the cuckoo near tanks perfumed with opening flowers, attacked and destroyed the Mahārathas; removed the word "common property" (with reference to) the country (bordering) on the roaring sea; administered justice tempered with mercy and ruled the earth with love, having reached the slopes of the high and permanent mountain (Māru) and cut on the broad face of it the bow, the tiger and the fish.

(L. 71) Then (came) his son Tēr-Māṇaṇ (i.e., Māṇaṇ of discernment) the king of kings, a member of the Pāṇḍya (Teṇṇavar) family, the proud possessor of the white parasol, who in order to acquire the goddess of the earth, carried in his right hand the awe-inspiring javelin and driving (forth) *mast* elephants (into the battle-field), defeated straightaway at Neḍuvayal his opponents, who had rushed in great haste (*against him*); suppressed the rage of those whose minds were filled with anger (*against him*), at Kuḡumaḍai; destroyed the power of (the enemies) who confronted him at Maṇḡikuḡichchi and Tirumaṅgai; saw the backs of the insubordinate (*chiefs*) who advanced towards him with an ocean-like army, at Pūvalūr; captured the fiery steeds, the black elephants and the sharp missiles of enemies at Koḍumbālūr which had high ramparts and deep trenches (round it); deprived the splendour of the Pallava (king).....at Kuḷumbūr and took numberless huge

elephants and horses; humbled at Perialūr the greatness of those who had come to cut him asunder not bearing (to see his greatness); crossed the Kāviri (*with its*) groves (of trees) and tanks of budding flowers; subjugated Maḷa-koṅgam with (the help of his) beautiful long bow; proceeded and reached Pāṇnikkoḍumuḍi of high fortifications, beautiful with the lustre emanating from brilliant gems; prostrated and worshipped the lotus feet of Paśupati (*Śiva*); gave away with great pleasure heaps of gold and lustrous gems; contracted relationship with Gaṅgarāja, who wore garlands of sweet-scented flowers; and performing on earth countless (gifts of) *Gōsahasra*, *hiraṇyagarbha* and *tulābhāra*, relieved the distress of (the Brāhmanas) who studied the Vēdas; renewed the places and the high ramparts (of the capital towns) named Kūḍaḷ (i.e., Madura), Vañji (Karūr) and Kōḷi (Uraiyūr) and ruled the whole earth (bounded) by the roaring ocean.

(L. 88) Then (came) his son Neḍuñjaḍaiyan, the king of the Nēriyar (i.e., the Ḷōḷas) who (wore) a high crown covered with flowers and gems, who kept (*his*) council secret, who was respected for his virtues (and possessed) an army of battalions (*as extensive*) as the rising noisy ocean, who was afraid of (committing) sins, who had no wants, who was lover of the learned (Paṇḍitavatsala), death to his enemies (Parāntaka), a Pārtha (i.e., Arjuna) in (wielding) the bow, clever in his designs, cruel to the wicked, the enemy of the Kali (*age*) (Kalippagai), the performer of noble deeds, the abode of mercy, a Kinnara in music, firm as mountain, the smasher of heroes, he who equalled Manu, whose commands were obeyed, who was strong as wind, the foremost of the valiant, master of heroism, renowned for good behaviour, free from (all) blemish, Punappūḷiyan, Śinachchōlan, Śrīvara, the paramour of Śrī (i.e., Lakshmi), the Teṇṇaṇ (i.e., Pāṇḍya), and Vāṇavaṇ (i.e., Chēra) whose long hand holds the bow and whose one word (of command) was accepted by the earth (*bounded by*) the noisy sea, who appeared in the form of Viṣṇu with victory thrice-told, protecting the earth under his cool white umbrella, well praised by the goddess of the flower (i.e., Lakshmi), the goddess of the earth and the goddess of the tongue (i.e., Sarasvatī); we began

his rule so brilliantly that the strength of the lord of Kali was weakened; who, in the battle of Peṇṇāgaḍam (*surrounded by*) an expanse of water and flowery groves and (*situated*) on the southern bank of the Kāvēri of blooming flowers and well-watered paddy fields, defeated the Kāḍava (king), who inconsiderately came and attacked (*him*) with his four-fold big army spread on all sides of the extensive earth girt by the black ocean, and drove (*him*) into the forest; and who crushing and driving in a fierce battle the Āya-Vēl and the Kurumbas that came and attacked (*him*) in great numbers; advanced with fiery spears and gained a victory over them in a battle at Vāṭṭukkuṇṇambu (i.e., Kuṇṇambu-nadu) (*so that they*) sought shelter in the forests of (*their*) fortifications.

(L. 103) While the third year of the reign of this (*king*) was current, one (*particular*) day, a bystander of Kūḍal (i.e., Madura) (*the city of*) mansions and high ramparts, having cried out (*by way of complaint*), the king himself at once called him mildly and was pleased to ask him first "what is your complaint." The bystander submitted thus "Oh! Mighty king of powerful army! Formerly without swerving from the pure (*path*) prescribed by law, (the village) called Vēlvikuḍi included in Pāganūr-kūṇṇam, whose flowery groves touched the sky, was designated Vēlvikuḍi and was granted through the (*kēḷvi*) (Brahmanas) by your ancestor the great lord known as Palyāgamudukuḍumi-Peruvaḷudi, who protected (the earth) girt by the ocean with an army of spearmen who never miss (*their aim*). It has (*since*) been resumed by the brave ocean-like army of the Kaḷabhras." The king gently smiled and said: "Very vell, very well, prove your antiquity (*of the gift*) by (*a reference to*) the district (*assembly*) and receive (*it back*)." He (the supplicant) proved then and there, the antiquity of his (*claim*) by (*a reference to*) the district (*assembly*). Thereupon the powerful king, of long arms holding the bow, being overjoyed was pleased to declare "what was granted formerly by my elders (*guruvars*) according to rule, is also granted by us" and so saying the discerning he, (of many chariots?) of ocean-like army, gave (*it*) with libations of water to Kāmakkāṇi Naṇṇiṇṇaṇ, the headman of Koṇṇai.

(L. 118) The four big boundaries of this (*village*) given in full detail are:—(*The eastern boundary is*) to the west of the boundary of Nagarūr surrounded on (*all*) sides by faultless flower—gardens. The southern boundary of this (*is*) to the north of the field (*called*) Kūlvandai-śēy of Kuḷandēvaṇ and of the banyan tree in the Kaḷandai-pond. The western boundary of this (*is*) to the east of the mound (*peruppu*) on the western side of the field (*called*) Oḍumaiyiruppai-śēy of the faultless Korraṇputtūr. And the northern boundary of this (*is*) to the south of the mound on the northern side of (*the village of*) Pāyal where lotuses grow in canals.

(L. 124) The land included within the four big boundaries thus described is also given away by us, inclusive of *kārāṇmai* and *miyāṭchi*, in the same manner as it had been given formerly by our elders.

(L. 126) The *āṇatti* of this (grant) correctly described is Maḍavikalaṇ, Mārangāri, the crest-jewel of the Vaidyaka family entitled Mūvēndamaṇḡalappēraraiyan who was favoured by the king of kings, whose army fought powerfully like a thunderbolt, in battles where machines (contraptions?) shaped like wild hogs (*ēnappoṟi*) killed (the enemies) in (*close*) fight with (*drawn*) swords when the kings of the east (Pūrvarājar) possessing clamorous battalions of fighting men rose up, and put to fight with (*great*) loss in an infantry attack at Veṇbai, the Vallabha of the vast army of archers, on the occasion when the excellent daughter of Gaṇḡarāja who wore a garland of highly scented flowers (*dribbling*) honey was secured and offered to Koṇḡarkōṇ (i.e., the Pāṇḍya king), who was a prince of the race of Karavandapurattavar, who possessed a powerful big army that crushed the pride of those who came to fight being (*thither*) brought together by (i.e., under the leadership of) kings wearing many bracelets and possessing an army of spearmen who wielded deadly weapons.

(L. 134) Kāmakkāṇi Śuvaran, the headman of Koḡkai, who owns this (*brahmadēya*) reserving for himself one-third of this (*village*), gave the (*remaining*) to parts to fifty Brāhmanas with libations of water, In this are included the four and a half



*paḍāgāras* (of land) of Mūrti Eyinan approved by the (village) assembly. And in the part reserved for himself in this (village) he gave with the approval of the (village) assembly four *paḍāgāras* to his younger brothers and six *paḍāgāras* to his younger paternal uncle's children. And the owners of the three parts with their united approval gave four *paḍāgāras* (of land) to the general (Sēnāpati) Ēnādi *alias* Śāttaṇ Śāttan, who composed this eulogy (*praśasti*).

(V. 18) The *ājñapti* of this (document) was Maṅgalaraja, the very sweet (*madhuratara*) poet (*kavi*) and orator, well versed in the sciences, a Vaidya and a resident of Karavandapura.

(V. 19) Oh! Dharma! A (*learned*) man must render protection to the deeds of others. Indeed (*these are*) the feet acquired by (i.e., on which stands) great fame. The world was all created by Dhātṛi (Brahman). Still kings desirous of merit protect the earth.

(V. 20) No gift is greater than the gift of land; nor is there a greater sin enjoined (*on man*) than (*that of*) resuming land (*already given*).

(V. 21) Oh! Gladdener of your race! He that makes a gift on this earth blesses (*his*) the generations past and future; and he that takes away (*that which has been given*) destroys ten generations past and future.

(V. 22) To him that robs land given by himself or by others, there is no expiation anywhere except in the dreadful hell.

(V. 23) Lands have been given away by many. Different kings are ruling (*them*). The fruit (*of protection*) belongs to him whose land it happens to be (*at the time*). These four are verses in the Vaishṇava-Dharma.

(L. 151) "The flower-like feet of those who protect this (*charity*) shall be on my crown". The king himself was thus pleased to say and caused a copper-plate grant to be executed at once.

(L. 152) Śuttakēśari-perumbāṇaikkāraṇ who engraved this (document), and to whom were allotted through the favour of the great men (of this village) one house site, two *ma* of (wet) field and one dry field received (the above). This is the signature of Yuddhakēśari-Perumbāṇaikkāraṇ.



